

RURAL WALKS:

IN

DIALOGUES.

INTENDED FOR THE USE OF YOUNG PERSONS.

By CHARLOTTE SMITH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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P R E F A C E.

So numerous and so excellent are the books which have been written for the use of Children and Young Persons, within a very few years, that, on the great duties of life, nothing can, perhaps, be added, which is either new, or which can be addressed to them in any new form.

In this little Work, therefore, I have confined myself rather to what are called *les petites morales*. To repress discontent; to inculcate the necessity of submitting cheerfully to such situations as fortune may throw them into; to check that flippancy of remark, so frequently disgusting in girls of twelve or thirteen; and to

correct the errors that young people often fall into in conversation, as well as to give them a taste for the pure pleasures of retirement, and the sublime beauties of Nature; has been my intention.

In the very little time that the incessant necessity of writing for the support of my family allows me to bestow on the education of a girl between twelve and thirteen, I have found, notwithstanding the number of excellent books, that something of this kind was still wanting. I wished to unite the interest of the novel with the instruction of the school-book, by throwing the latter into the form of dialogue, mingled with narrative, and by giving some degree of character to the group. To do this, however, I have found it less easy than I imagined. It seems to be the peculiar felicity of the author of

L'Ami

L'Ami des Enfans to have written stories which are attractive to children, yet not uninteresting to others farther advanced in life. In general, such works must appear insipid to all but those for whom they are immediately designed, and should not therefore be judged of, as they frequently are, by persons who seem not sufficiently to consider that such books were not meant for their entertainment, but for the instruction of the rising generation.

That there are but few poets whose works can be put indiscriminately into the hands of very young people, the extracts which are daily offered for their use must fully evince. Indeed, I know of none but Gray and Collins which are wholly unexceptionable; and sublime as *their* poetry is, not many of their compositions can be relished by readers but just emerging from childhood.

In closing each of the following short Dialogues with some lines of poetry, I have endeavoured to select pieces likely to encourage a taste for simple composition; and if I have indulged the vanity or the fondness of an author, by inserting two or three of my own, I have done so, rather to gratify some young friends, than because I suppose them better than others. A copy of verses in the Second Volume is the production of a beloved and regreted friend, which I was glad of an opportunity to rescue from the injury they had received, by mutilated copies in manuscript.

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

Nov. 19, 1794.

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INTRODUCTION.

AT the distance of sixty miles from London, and in a small country town, or rather a large village, Mrs. Woodfield had chosen the retirement which her circumstances rendered necessary.

Born in prosperity, and educated in all those accomplishments which are cultivated to adorn society: having passed five and thirty years of her life in the splendors and enjoyments of affluence, a sudden reverse in the fortune of her husband, whose death, occasioned by disquiet and mortification, soon followed, reduced her to the necessity of retiring from the world.

Her sons (except the two youngest, who were yet children) had left her, to enter on the professions for which they were designed; but she had two daughters, one of thirteen, and the other of eleven years old.

To educate these children, so as to render them happy in that rank of life to which it now seemed to be their destiny to belong, was the great object of her life. The eldest was of an age to remember their former manner of life, though not of a disposition to remember it with regret; but the youngest had, in the simplicity of infancy, neither recollection of their past, nor concern for their present situation.

But in addition to the cares of Mrs. Woodfield on account of her own children, were those she had assumed on behalf of Caroline Cecil, the daughter of her brother, an officer,

ficer, who was abroad in the service of his country. His wife, a dissipated woman, related to nobility, was lately dead, and had left her daughter, who was a few months older than Elizabeth Woodfield, in a situation so friendless and desolate, as induced Mrs. Woodfield to take her immediately under her protection, though she was well aware, that the manner in which she had been brought up hitherto, had given her notions so different from those in which Mrs. Woodfield wished to educate her own daughters, that it could hardly fail to interfere with her present scheme of life.

In proportion as the character of Caroline Cecil became more known to her, she was more persuaded of the difficulty that would attend the task she had undertaken. But the affection she had for her brother, and

the resentment she felt for the cruelty of her niece's other relations, (who refused to take the least notice of her, orphan and desolate as she was,) determined Mrs. Woodfield, who had an excellent heart, to redouble her vigilance, rather than suffer the unfortunate Caroline Cecil to be consigned to strangers, to whom her welfare must be indifferent.

From an house in the neighbourhood of Berkley Square, much larger than Colonel Cecil's fortune could with prudence allow him to inhabit; from passing the summer at public bathing-places, and the winter in a continual round of company; Caroline Cecil entered, with a degree of affright and amazement, on a manner of life very different from that to which she had been accustomed.

It was the end of December when Mrs. Woodfield sent her servant to
London,

London, to attend her niece to her habitation. The road was every where tedious, from the badness of the weather; and that part of it which led across the country from the country town, was rough, and, in the imagination of Caroline, who had never travelled but upon the turn-pike roads that lead from London to places of great resort, it was so dangerous, that she expected to be overturned every moment. Her companion was a blunt uneducated country woman, who had nothing but honesty to recommend her, and who had no idea of the sensations of her fellow-traveller, but contented herself with remarking, that "it was a pity Miss was so dull;"—an observation that did not much contribute to make her otherwise.

Wind and rain, the darkness of a December night, and the fatigue and

fear occasioned by plunging through roads of clay and mud, gave to the countenance of Caroline Cecil so much dejection, that Mrs. Woodfield was struck with concern and amazement when she entered the room, where her aunt and her cousins had expected her the whole evening.

It was three years since they had last met; and since that period, Miss Cecil had been abroad with her mother, had been introduced into a great deal of company, and was so changed, that only the likeness she bore to her father gave to Mrs. Woodfield the idea of its being the same person whom she had seen three years before. She was dressed, though in deep mourning, in the extremity of fashion; and, amidst her dejection, there was an air of haughty superiority, mingled with something of concealed

concealed disdain, as she cast her eyes round the room, which, though neat, was small, and furnished with great simplicity. Mrs. Woodfield, as she made these remarks on her niece, felt all the possible inconvenience of the engagement she had entered into; but when she again traced, in the countenance of Miss Cecil, her strong resemblance to her brother, she was sensible of all that compassion and tenderness for her niece, which might enable her to fulfil the task she had undertaken.

Elizabeth and Henrietta Woodfield received their cousin with the ingenuous warmth of their age; delighted with having another companion; and, without the least tincture of jealousy in their tempers, they considered her arrival as one of the most agreeable events of their lives. Far from supposing that their cousin

thought of her future abode with them as of a species of banishment from human society, they imputed her melancholy to the recent loss of her mother, and the absence and danger of her father and brothers.

After an early and simple supper, Mrs. Woodfield, attended by her two daughters, conducted their visitor to the apartment that had been prepared for her. It was still more plain than the room they had left. A field bed, with white cotton curtains, two or three painted chairs, a Scotch carpet, a table for her glass, and a chest of wainscot drawers, composed the whole of the furniture; but over the latter there were some shelves, where Mrs. Woodfield told her she should have her books placed, as soon as they could be unpacked. "I have but very few, Madam," answered Caroline, sighing. "Well,
my

my love," replied her aunt, "perhaps I shall find means to increase your collection; but of those arrangements we will talk to-morrow; it is now time that you take some repose after the fatigue of your journey."

DIALOGUE I.

THE SICK COTTAGER.

[CAROLINE CECIL, going to the Window of her Bedchamber.]

Caroline.

OH! merciful Heaven, what a dreary place! — Good God! what will become of me! — To be buried alive in such a place as this! A wide common, with nothing in sight but those miserable cottages yonder, or a few clumps of mournful fir trees! — Heigh ho! — This time last year I was at Bath with mamma.

[ELIZABETH and HENRIETTA WOODFIELD enter the room.]

(*Both speak.*) My dear cousin! — my dear Caroline! — are you ready for breakfast?

Caroline

Caroline (sighing). Yes; quite ready, Miss Woodfield.

Elizabeth. Miss Woodfield!— Ah! how formal that is; but I am afraid you have not slept, Caroline— your eyes seem inflamed.

Caroline (dejectedly). No; it is only the cold wind yesterday that has affected them; and the wind in the country is so much sharper than I have been used to. I fancy it is very bleak here in the winter.—But had we not better go down? Mrs. Woodfield, I remember, told me she breakfasted early.

Henrietta. You cannot imagine, cousin, how we long to hear you play on the piano forté. Mamma has had it tuned on purpose for you; for, as it was of no use to either of us, because we do not play now, it was got quite out of order.

Caroline (coldly). I cannot play worth any one's hearing.

Henrietta. I am so fond of music! — Dear cousin, I hope you will play to us.

Caroline (still more coldly). I am only sorry I cannot play well enough to amuse you. [They go down.]

The breakfast passes with little conversation. Mrs. Woodfield makes tender inquiries after her niece's health. Caroline appears cold and dejected.

Mrs. Woodfield. And now, Caroline, will you remain in the house, or go with Elizabeth and me to visit a poor family, who are in a situation to want even the little assistance we can give them?

Caroline. I will go, if you please, Madam.

A frost,

A frost, which followed the heavy rain of the preceding evening, made the short walk they now undertook less disgusting to the delicacy of Caroline, who dreaded the dirt, and still trembled at the cold they must encounter in crossing the common; but any thing was to her less irksome than being alone, and she determined, since it was her hard fate to be shut up in the dreary solitude of the country, to accustom herself to go out as well as she could. The discontent that hung upon her features did not escape the observation of her aunt, who was glad of this opportunity of shewing her what real misery was, and checking that disposition to repine, which makes so much of the artificial calamity of life.

They entered a cottage, of which the mud walls were in many places falling down, the thatch broken, and
the

the windows darkened by paper and rags, that were stuffed between the broken panes. Over a few embers, which the green sticks that were laid upon them could not make aspire to a flame, sat a Cottager, whose pale squalid countenance, and emaciated figure, presented too strong an image of disease and famine. He was wrapped in a tattered great coat, and hung cowering over the fire with a child upon his knee, which he appeared hardly to have strength to support, and to whom he had given a piece of bread, which he seemed equally unwilling and unable to share with it. His wife, with stifled anguish in her countenance, was preparing, as she stood at a table, a mixture of something that was to serve as food for the family, while three children, the eldest not six years of age, stood watching till it should be ready for them, with the

the impatient eagerness of hunger. Opposite to the unhappy father, on the other side of the fire, was a cradle, with an infant in it only a few weeks old.

On the entrance of Mrs. Woodfield and her family, a ray of joy seemed to illumine the eyes of the poor woman.

“ Ah ! madam,” said she, “ how good is it in you to come again !— But, bless me ! what a place for you and the young ladies to come into !”

Mrs. Woodfield. Never mind the place—How is your husband?— Come, go on with what you are about.

Poor Woman. Dear Madam, if it had not been for you, I verily believe he would not have been alive. For, Ma'am, it was to no purpose I went to farmer Denny ; he was quite in a rage when I asked for some little matter

ter more of help, and bid me I should go again to the justices next Saturday at Bench, and see if they'd make a new order, to help us to live in idleness another month.

The poor Man (sighing, and in a tremulous voice). As if it was my desire to remain idle ! and to see my children starve around me ! I who, till I got this fever and ague last barley harvest, never have left work one day since I was married, now seven years come May.

Poor woman (half crying). I do think it cruel hard, Madam ; for nobody in the parish can say that we ever were troublesome, even in the hardest times. But all goes by favour in our parish ! Hows'ever, Ma'am, my poor husband, thank God, is not worse this morning ; and the wine-why you sent him did him more good than the doctor's stuff.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield then proceeded to inquire into the man's complaints; and, promising them farther relief from her kitchen, she put half-a-crown into the woman's hand, and left the house.

Elizabeth and Henrietta shewed by their countenance, as well as by the questions they asked their mother, that the situation of the poor family had affected them; but their cousin continued silent, till Mrs. Woodfield spoke to her.

Mrs. Woodfield. Well, Caroline, what do you think of the scene we have just witnessed? Are not sickness and poverty real evils? And do not such spectacles teach us the wickedness and folly of that discontent we are so apt to indulge, if we are not exactly in the place which we prefer, or with the people who amuse us? Tell me, my dear, have you been used to consider
the

the situation of millions of your fellow-creatures, who are not better situated than the poor family we have just seen?

Caroline. You know, Madam, that we did not live in the country at all when my mamma was alive; and in London one never thinks of the poor people—

Mrs. Woodfield. Though in no place on earth there is so much misery! When we return home, my dear Caroline, you shall copy for me a few lines from Thomson, on the subject of the thoughtlessness of the affluent and fortunate. I wish to teach you to think on subjects which, I believe, you have never yet been led to reflect upon; you have a very good understanding, and I think you have a good heart.

Caroline. I hope, Madam, I have not a bad heart. I am sure I wish

no ill to any body ; but in regard to acts of charity, Madam, I suppose I was too young for mamma to require me to give away what we could spare.

Mrs. Woodfield. No person is too young to be taught to think, my dear Caroline. My daughters are younger than you are ; no family, Heaven knows, have less to give away than we have ; but yet I have been fortunate enough to awaken, in the hearts of Elizabeth and Henrietta, so much reflection, that more than once, when I have offered them some little indulgence, they have preferred giving the money it would have cost, to such distressed object as happened then to be most immediately in their recollection. Tell me now, which would give you the most pleasure ; to be able to relieve the wretched family we have just seen, or to go to the ball which is to be held, on the 7th of

of January, in the Town Hall
at W——?

At the mention of a ball, all the habits of her former life returned to the recollection of Caroline Cecil; and though a Christmas ball at a provincial town was, she knew, very unlike those splendid assemblies she had been used to frequent, yet it was not without its allurements. She had been told that she was very handsome, very elegant, had a look of fashion, and something superior in her air and manner; all which she implicitly believed. She knew that she danced particularly well, and in the most fashionable style;—what an impression then must all these accomplishments make on the frequenters of a country assembly! how much admiration she should excite! how much praise she should hear!—Her heart beat high as all this occurred to her; but she
knew

knew she must check its emotion. After a moment's hesitation, therefore, she answered :

Caroline. To be sure, Madam, I should be very glad, were it in my power, to do good to these or any other poor persons ; but I imagine that I am not, in my circumstances, in a situation to to be able to help them to any purpose. As to going out, I hope I shall never wish to go against your inclinations. Certainly I am fond of society, and have been used to think that young people should be allowed some innocent pleasure : but I am a stranger here, and have no thoughts, I am sure, of asking you to go to a ball on my account.

Mrs. Woodfield (entering immediately into the thoughts that her niece imagined she concealed). No, my dear ; I dare say you would not. And I am glad you would not, because

cause I should be sorry to refuse you the first request you made me. I mentioned the ball at W. merely as the only public amusement within our reach, for I have no intention of going; the weather is too cold, and the expence greater than I can afford. But that is not all. You are in your first mourning for your mother; she has not been dead more than six weeks; and, though fashionable folks have got above all such forbearance, it will little become a young person of very small fortune to emulate such unfeeling carelessness; for, if ever you hope to amend that fortune, it must be done by shewing that you possess the virtues of sensibility, gratitude, and humility.

Caroline sighed deeply, but did not reply. Mrs. Woodfield, for the remainder of their short walk, addressed her conversation to her own daughters,

daughters, while her niece again looked round in despondence on the dreary scene they were passing.

A driving fleet rendered every object more chill and obscure; and Caroline, having changed her clothes, attended at the dinner table with a gloomy and discontented air. Involuntarily she compared the present with the past; but in a very different manner from what her aunt had intended by the lesson of the morning.

Alas! thought she, is it thus my life is to pass! All the morning in visiting the miserable mansions of a parcel of beggars! I am sure I am not hard-hearted, and would give them halfpence or sixpence at any time, with all my heart, if I happened to have any small money about me; but to go into such nasty unwholesome places, and hear of nothing but such dismal stories! I believe very few

few young persons would like that ; it is enough to lower their spirits, and make mopes of them for the rest of their lives.

It did not occur to her, that these unwholesome habitations, which she could not bear to enter for a few moments, were the perpetual abodes of creatures whose feelings and necessities were the same as her own ; and very certainly she did not know, that to inquire into and relieve distress, was so far from having a depressing effect on the minds of youth, that never does the heart feel so light, never are the enjoyments our own situation affords, so keenly relished as when we are conscious, proudly conscious, of having done our duty, and of being the means of mitigating the evils incident to humanity.

These ideas, however, which are sometimes innate, but oftener, perhaps

haps, arise from an early habit of reflection, Caroline Cecil had not yet acquired. She saw indeed her two cousins gay and cheerful; nor was that cheerfulness obscured by the remarks they made on the scene of sickness and sorrow to which they had that morning been witness; on the contrary, they seemed to feel pleasure in imagining little projects of their own, for the relief of the younger individuals of this unhappy family. Elizabeth asked her mamma's leave to cut up a gown she had ceased to wear, to make a frock for one of the children; and Henrietta desired to be permitted to lay out a few shillings she had saved, in flannel for the other. Their mother readily acquiesced in their plans, without, however, giving to either that sort of praise, as if she thought that in these instances of humanity

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manity they made any extraordinary or unusual exertion.

Mrs. Woodfield, however, observed with concern, that this first lesson of humility and charity had failed in regard to her niece, who continued silent and almost sullen. In the evening of winter, it was sometimes her custom to give her daughters a short lesson from some favourite author, as an exercise of nice writing: that she chose for this evening, was from Thomson :

“ Ah ! little think the gay licentious proud,
“ Whom pleasure, power, and affluence sur-
“ round,
“ They, who their thoughtless hours in
“ giddy mirth
“ And wanton, often cruel riot waste ;”
“ Ah ! little think they, while they dance
“ along,
“ How many feel, this very moment, death,
“ And all the sad variety of pain ;
“ How many sink in the devouring flood,

“ Or

- “ Or more devouring flame ; how many bleed
“ By shameful variance between man and
“ man ;
“ How many pine in want, and dungeon
“ glooms,
“ Shut from the common air, and common
“ use
“ Of their own limbs ; how many drink the
“ cup
“ Of baleful grief, or eat the bitter bread
“ Of misery : Sore pierc’d by wintry winds,
“ How many shrink into the sordid hut
“ Of cheerless poverty !”

DIALOGUE II.

THE DORMOUSE.

SLOWLY and heavily, for Caroline Cecil, passed the remainder of the month of January. February was cold and stormy, and the prolonged winter hovered over them with even a more gloomy aspect than it had worn in the frosts of his mid career. 'The snow-drop, however, faintly peeped forth amidst the tempest, and some other wintry flowers announced the return of spring. The first that reared its tender head above the fallen leaves and dead grass, in a corner of their little shrubbery, gave inexpressible pleasure to Henrietta, who every morning passed that way to feed some favourite

favourite poultry, lodged in an adjoining out-house. She came in with that simple innocent joy, so pleasing in early youth to every one, but so particularly interesting to a mother.

[Mrs. WOODFIELD and ELIZABETH were at work—CAROLINE was drawing at a table near the fire.

Henrietta. Oh! my dear mamma, do you know we have got snow-drops in the garden already? there are twenty or thirty that will be quite blown out to-morrow! And there is a pale yellow flower, or rather a greenish flower, with a little red about it. Mamma! you will be delighted to see them! I wish you would come out to look at them.

Mrs. Woodfield. It rains, my love, and I have got a sad cold; but I will see them to-morrow. It is always delightful to mark the first approach of spring.

Caroline. It seems to me as if there never was any spring in the country.

Mrs. Woodfield. Indeed, Miss Cecil!—The remark is so new to me, that, had I made one on the same subject, I should have reversed it, and have said, that it seems to me there is never any spring in London.

Caroline (sighing). Ah! dear Madam, you certainly have forgotten the delightful roses, lilies, and I know not how many charming flowers, for I always forget their names, which one used to have from that delightful man in Bond-street. Mamma used to have them sent here twice a week; and she had such elegant bureaux made of wire, and painted green; our drawing-room used to be quite a little paradise. And we used to have such lovely nosegays of roses—

Mrs. Woodfield. Roses! when they were eighteen pence or two shillings a-piece!

a piece ! Alas ! dear Caroline, those luxuries, like many others, are not only totally unfit for persons of small and precarious fortunes, but by creating artificial wants, they destroy the enjoyment of natural pleasures. I allow, that nothing is more lovely than an hot-house rose ; light, free from insects, glowing with the softest colours, it is perhaps more beautiful than the roses we gather in the first week of June ; but when we have enjoyed these forced productions for two or three months, June offers us her roses in vain ; we see them in every cottage garden ; and their charms are become common and uninteresting. I allow, however, that to persons of large independent fortune, this is one of the most innocent, and would be to me, were I in that situation, one of the greatest gratifications.

tions. But for you, I rather regret your having acquired a notion, that the beauty of spring consists in an ornamented drawing-room, dressed with flowers procured by art, because those you perhaps will never be able to procure; whereas a taste for the genuine beauties of nature is, at all times, and in all seasons and situations, a source of the purest and most innocent delight.

Caroline remained silent, and probably unconvinced. A party to Ranelagh, a card meeting, in which five or six girls of her own age could get into a corner and giggle together, or titter round the uniform insipidity of a commerce table, she still thought preferable to all the fine views that ever were beheld. The country, to her, was still a blank, and the people she had hitherto seen were all twaddlers and

and quizzes. She was not, therefore, much delighted, when her aunt thus addressed herself to Elizabeth :

Mrs. Woodfield. My dear, as my cold may be increased if I venture out this evening, I shall send you and your cousin to Mrs. Gervais's, to pay my visit, and apologize for me.

Elizabeth. To be sure, mamma, if you desire it, I will go ; but—

Mrs. Woodfield. But what ?

Elizabeth. Only, mamma—that if you did not particularly desire it . . .

Mrs. Woodfield. What then ?

Elizabeth. Why then, mamma—I should say, it was a bore.

Mrs. Woodfield. And a twaddle, I dare say, and all those other expressive words that you have learned of Caroline ?

Elizabeth. Nay, my dear mamma, I have heard you say very often that Mrs. Gervais was very dull.

Mrs. Woodfield. And are you always to live with people who are very entertaining?

Elizabeth. No, mamma; but that good little woman talks so about her pigs and her poultry, and how she makes bacon, and how many apples she had in her orchard, and such sort of things, that it really tires one to death.

Mrs. Woodfield. Give me leave to inquire, Elizabeth, whether the topics on which you would talk, are not quite as uninteresting to Mrs. Gervais?

Elizabeth. Perhaps they are, mamma; but then I do not insist on talking to Mrs. Gervais.

Mrs. Woodfield. Nor does she, I dare say, insist upon talking to you.

Elizabeth. Not when you are there, mamma; but when there is only us girls, she always preaches, just in the same

same manner; and tells us, that young *Misses* ought to know all *them there things*; and that she hopes Miss Betsey and Miss Henny never will be above hearing how to make good housewives. Calling one *Misses*, and Miss Betsey and Miss Henny is so vulgar, and so disagreeable, that it puts one out of patience: and, besides, if people are wise enough to instruct others, I wish they would learn to do it in good English.

Mrs. Woodfield. I own, Mrs. Gervais is not elegant, nor even educated: but she has many good qualities, which ought to make you overlook much greater defects. You should consider too, that when she was a young woman, persons in the middle class of life were not educated with the care they are now; that her life has passed in the execution of useful duties, which have left her no

time to cultivate her mind; and that it is not wonderful, that those duties and occupations are, in her opinion, the only proper pursuits; since she has, for so many years, had no other objects before her eyes. I am sure, you would laugh more at Mrs. Gervais, if you heard her descant on new fashions, or talk fine on any of the subjects of conversation, that are quite out of her way.

Elizabeth. That I should, perhaps. But then, mamma, you must allow, that she would be a vast deal more entertaining, for then she would make me laugh, and now she makes me yawn.

Mrs. Woodfield. Yawn, if you will, but do not let her see it. We cannot always enjoy the conversation we would choose, any more than we can always, in travelling, pass through a beautiful and pleasant country. We must
some-

sometimes go up heavy sandy hills, sometimes over dreary flat commons; but it would be a misfortune, if our taste was so very refined and fastidious as to make us really uneasy unless we were always in sight of green meadows, purling rivulets, and beautiful woods. And it will be certainly counteracting, my child, the purposes of your education, which is to make you reasonable and happy, if, instead of teaching you to pass over the slight faults of others, or to profit by them in mending your own, you learned to be vain of the very little you know, (which every well educated girl knows as well, and some better than you do,) and to despise and fly from every one who may not have had equal advantages. Believe me, my Elizabeth, I have seen, and very lately too, some very fine ladies, people in superior life, who speak even worse English than

than poor Mrs. Gervais, and will talk of their card adventures, or scandalize their acquaintance, with violations of grammar greatly more offensive than what our notable neighbour is subject to: and I have seen such billets, as, I am sure, are worse, both in spelling and style, than those receipts which I once employed you to copy from the hereditary repository of Mrs. Gervais. Go, therefore, Elizabeth, this afternoon. You, Caroline, will go also. Henrietta shall remain at home with me.

In pursuance of this arrangement, the young people went on their visit to the wife of the curate of the village. The next morning, while Mrs. Woodfield was adjusting some books in a little room behind that where she usually breakfasted with her family, she heard the following dialogue between Caroline and Elizabeth:

Caroline.

Caroline. Well, cousin, have you recovered from the lectures of last night; or from the sight of Miss Jane Gervais, in her fashionable riding-habit, hat, and feather?

Elizabeth (laughing). Did any mortal ever see such a ridiculous figure? I am sure she had iron stays on under that pompadour armour. And then her hat! and her feathers! and her hair so frizzled, like her father's wig, and powdered so white, that I really thought at first the old man had lent her his best caxon, and that she had put it on hind-side before, that it might become her amiable little straw-coloured visage the better.

Caroline. But the beauty of it all is, that this odd-looking little Dutch toy (for she is just like a wooden woman that one sees in a toy-shop) fancies

fancies herself so much the thing, that one is ready to die with laughing.

Mrs. Woodfield (entering). You see, therefore, I hope, the absurdity of pretensions to what one cannot reach. This poor Jane Gervais has seen fine ladies dressed in feathers, and, not considering how very ill the rest of her habiliments suit with such an ornament, how much better simplicity and neatness accord with humble fortune than shew and finery, she has loaded her head with old feathers, and exposed her want of judgment. You would have seen nothing ridiculous, Miss Cecil, if this luckless object of your satire had been clad in a linen gown and muslin apron.

Caroline (confusedly). No, Madam; but if you had seen her

Mrs. Woodfield. If I had seen her, she would have appeared an object rather of concern than ridicule. I should

should have been very sorry for her; and should have tried gently to have hinted to her, that she made herself an object not of admiration, as she intended, but of pity and ridicule.

Elizabeth. And indeed, mamma, if you had, she would only have hated you; for, I am sure, she would not have believed you. You have no notion how conceited she is, and how her mother encourages her in it; by saying that Jane has been here, Jane has been there, and seen such and such ladies, and Jane had her hair dressed by such a man at Salisbury, who dresses all the *quality*.

Mrs. Woodfield. This affectation then of elegance is ten times worse, Caroline, than the humbler pretensions of her mother; is it not?

Caroline. A thousand times worse.

Mrs. Woodfield. And yet, perhaps, it has never struck you, that there are people,

people, in very superior life, to whom *your* pretensions to elegance and refinement may appear to be efforts, as impotent and absurd, as those of Miss Jane, to be fine and fashionable, appear to you.

Caroline. I know, aunt, that I *am* to be mortified.

Mrs. Woodfield. Not at all, my dear Caroline. I am sorry to see that which, you know, the French call *l'esprit mordant, caustique**, predominate so much, both in you and in Elizabeth; and, before you acquire an habit of indulging it too much, remember, that you may not always be exempt from feeling its sting from others. This recollection will immediately bring you back to the first principle of all good, of all moral rectitude: "Do, as you would others

* Biting, acrimonious.

" should

"should do unto you." Or, to refer you to that most simply sublime of all compositions, the prayer taught you by Jesus Christ,—“ You shall learn to beg that you may be forgiven your trespasses, even as you forgive those who trespass against you.” But, perhaps, I take this matter too seriously. Come, my loves, put on your hats and cloaks; the morning is fine; as soon as breakfast is over, we will go and take a long walk.

This walk was through the garden, into a wood or coppice beyond it. In passing through it, Henrietta carried her mother to look at the snow-drops, with which she had been so pleased the day before.

Henrietta. Oh, mamma! see how they are blown out, and how pretty they are!

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. They are very elegant, and are elegantly described in a couplet of Mrs. Barbauld's :

“ As Flora's breath, by some transform-
“ ing power,
“ Had changed an icicle into a flower.”

Henrietta. And see, mamma, this beautiful flower in green, and unlike every other flower !

Mrs. Woodfield. I do not think it so beautiful ; but every flower, at its first appearance, is pretty and interesting. This is the black hellebore, or what is commonly called the winter rose. We shall, I dare say, observe, that many of the wild flowers are unfolding on the sheltered banks, which have hitherto been checked by the severity of the weather.

Henrietta. Mamma ! do you know, that in my garden there is a plant
coming

coming out full of deep red blossoms; there are even one or two little flowers blown, and they smell delightfully.

Mrs. Woodfield. It is the mezerion; and is of the same species of plant as that beautiful *Daphné Cneorum*, or garland *Daphné*, which we all knelt down to smell to, when we saw it in Mr. Bridport's garden.

Henrietta. So it is, mamma; I declare now I recollect they are very much alike. Oh! how delightfully every thing begins to spring in the hedges! Here are golden cups!

Mrs. Woodfield. No; it is the pilewort. If you observe the leaves, they are more pointed than those of the flower you call a golden cup, which is, in fact, a *ranunculus*. But to whom are your cousin and your sister talking so earnestly?

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield (approaching, and speaking to the labourer with whom they were in conversation). Well, Master Anderson, how are you? you seem much recovered.

Labourer. Thank you kindly, Ma'am; I be a power better, and able to go about my work quite bravely. I made bold, Madam, to bring the young Misses a sleeper * I have found; I thought how, maybe, they'd like to keep un in a box.

Caroline. It is a little beast that seems to be half dead, for it does but just move.

Mrs. Woodfield. It is a dormouse! one of those creatures that become torpid in winter.

Henrietta. Torpid! Mamma, what is that?

* Dormouse, so called by the peasants.

Elizabeth. Dear child ! don't you know what torpid is ?

Mrs. Woodfield. Are you sure, Elizabeth, that you know yourself ?

Elizabeth (conceitedly). To be sure I do.

Mrs. Woodfield. Explain it then to your sister.

Elizabeth. Torpid, is heavy, sleepy, stupid, not able to move in cold weather.

Mrs. Woodfield. It is all those ; but, in this instance, it means more. There are animals for whom nature seems to have made, if I may so express myself, a provision of insensibility. In winter, their juices stagnate ; they sleep till the warm weather returns, and brings with it what are for them the necessaries of life. The dormouse has the credit of making a little provision against the contingency of a warm day, which might awaken him

him before nature had provided for his support. The squirrel, a more lively and sensible creature, certainly has *his* provision of nuts, acorns, the seeds of the pine tree, beech nuts, and what else he can get.

Henrietta. The squirrel is not torpid, mamma, in winter?

Mrs. Woodfield. Not entirely so, I believe; but he is by no means so active and alert as in summer. He betakes himself to some snug hole in an hollow tree, where, on dead leaves and moss, he sleeps great part of his time, now and then making a little fortie on a fine day, and nibbling a little of his store. But come, take the dormouse; and here, Master Anderson, is a shilling for you. Elizabeth, do you choose to have this poor little animal? I do not ask *you*, Caroline, because I know you have rather a dislike to such things.

Elizabeth.

Elizabeth. My cousin, I am sure, won't have it: nor I don't know that I like it much; it seems to me to be such a stupid little thing, with its eyes half open.

Mrs. Woodfield. Well then, Henrietta, it will fall to your share.

Henrietta (delighted). Oh! you sweet, little, soft, innocent thing! I will take all sort of care of you.

Caroline (sighing and aside). I think I should like to be a dormouse, if I were always to live in the country in the winter.

Mrs. Woodfield. Caroline, you do not seem to admire the beauty of this copse. See, how it is already spangled with primroses; and that lovely, though scentless flower, the wood anemony! Gather me a few of those that are the most blown, my Henrietta! Look at these purple clouds that just stain the soft white leaves;

and these rays of yellow that form a little glory round the centre.

Caroline. Yes!—they are as pretty as wild flowers ever are.

Mrs. Woodfield. Do you recollect, that all flowers are wild in some quarter or other of the world; and that many of the most curious and beautiful plants in our gardens, are the wild flowers of Asia, Africa, and America; many of the southern parts of Europe, and some of colder countries?—But it is time to return towards home.

Henrietta (running back to her mother). Oh! mamma, here is a frightful beggar-man coming! I am afraid of him;—suppose he should want to hurt us!

Mrs. Woodfield. I will not suppose it. The poor man seems to be an unfortunate cripple. So far from flying from him, I will stop and speak

to him. If he had any ill design, do you not see that Richard Anderson is still mending that hedge within a few paces of us, and that therefore we need not be alarmed?

(The beggar approaches, and tells a melancholy story. Mrs. WOODFIELD gives him some relief. The children also give him what half-pence they have about them, and proceed on their walk.)

[HENRIETTA holding fast her mother's hand; the two others keeping close to her.]

Caroline, I'm glad the hedger is so near us, or I declare I should have been frightened to death.

Elizabeth. I cannot say I like the looks of the man; besides, mamma, I have heard a great many people say, that it is never any charity to give money to common beggars.

Mrs. Woodfield. I have not, for my part, sagacity enough to distinguish what are called common beggars, from poor men disabled by illness from working, or accidentally distressed in a strange country, where they have no claim to parochial relief. I only know, that in giving a few halfpence, it is possible I may encourage an idle vagabond, but it is also possible I may relieve an unfortunate fellow-creature; and it is best to do that which may afford a chance of doing good. On these occasions, I seldom fail to recollect some beautiful lines of Langhorne's, which contain a pathetic apology for the unhappy wanderers called common beggars. Speaking of one of that description, he says,

“ Perhaps, on some inhospitable shore,

“ The wretch, forlorn, a widow'd parent
“ bore;

“ Cold,

“ Cold, on Canadian hills, or Minden’s
 “ plain,
“ Perhaps that parent mourn’d her foldier
 “ slain,
“ Hung o’er her babe, her eyes surcharg’d
 “ with dew,
“ The salt drops mingling with the milk
 “ he drew,
“ And wept, sad omen of his future years,
“ The child of misery, baptiz’d in tears !”

DIALOGUE III.

THE RUINED MONASTERY.

A FINE and mild morning tempted Mrs. Woodfield and her family to extend their walk to the Downs, which were at a small distance from her house. To the meadows beneath these hills, the lambs, newly fallen, gave animation and beauty ; while the wether flocks, on the higher grounds, began to enjoy the young herbage, slowly stealing over the withered turf. Half way up was one of those huts, constructed for the purpose of sheltering the shepherd from the inclemency of the weather. Its humble occasional inhabitant was not in it, but his daughter, a girl of twelve years old, and

and her two little brothers, were eating their scanty dinner, which consisted only of some crusts of bread, and two or three half boiled potatoes. Notwithstanding the poorness of their fare, and the little covering they wore, they seemed to be healthy and happy. Mrs. Woodfield bade them bring out to the door a wooden bench that was within the hut, and which served its rustic inmates for both table and chairs; and, while she sat there, with Caroline and Elizabeth on each side of her, she pointed out to their observation several objects in the vale beneath them. Two of these, the seats of two persons of different characters, gave occasion for some remarks "on the use and abuse of riches."

Mrs. Woodfield. In that house, far to the left, lives Sir Herbert Harbottle. It is one of the most beauti-

ful places in this part of the country ; but Sir Herbert has no other pleasure in it than as it supplies him with the luxuries of the table, to which he is extremely addicted. Selfish, proud, and unfeeling, his neighbours seldom know of his residence in the country, but from the depredations he makes in pursuit of his game ; not that he is a sportsman, but he is a glutton. Nobody ever heard of his doing a generous action ; nor has he a friend in the world. Poverty and misery surround him ; for his tenants are at rack-rent, and the peasants are, at many seasons of the year, without employment. The consequence is, that he is continually complaining that his game is destroyed by poachers, and his farm-yard robbed by thieves.

Elizabeth. What a hateful man !
I wonder any body speaks to him.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. And yet this man is well received. See him at a public place, and you see him courted and bowed to by many men who love the good things that are to be found at his table too well to care about his character. Such men as

——“ prefer, no doubt,
“ A knave with ven'son, to a saint without.”

Caroline. There is a Lady Harbottle, I think, aunt; I have seen her at routs.

Mrs. Woodfield. The Lady you have seen is the widow of Sir Herbert's elder brother; a woman who has a very small jointure out of the estate, which he pays with infinite reluctance, and for which this poor woman and two daughters are often compelled to wait many months.

Caroline. An odious man!

Mrs. Woodfield. And yet, Caroline, I dare say, you know, from the former observations you have made, that many of your London friends would think themselves very happy to be addressed by Sir Herbert Harbottle, and would care little what was his character, if he would give them a title.

Caroline. Certainly, my dear aunt, a title *is* a pleasant thing.

Mrs. Woodfield. Many foolish women have thought so, and have sacrificed to a sound the real happiness of their lives. But, tell me, should you be really happier, were you called Lady Caroline Cecil?

Caroline. No, perhaps, not really happier; though I don't know. It makes one happier to be respected, to have *place*, and to hear people say—
“ We will ask Lady Caroline—Lady Caroline must know—We must not
begin

begin the dance till her Ladyship comes ;" and so on.

Mrs. Woodfield. Such "mouth honour" can, I should hope, give no pleasure to a rational and thinking being. See those fir-trees in the distant horizon, which we distinguish only by their dark colouring. They bound one side of a park, which belongs to a man, who is more respected *without* a title, than Sir Herbert Harbottle would be if he were the first Peer of England.

Elizabeth. Who is it, mamma?

Mrs. Woodfield. It is Mr. Somerville, my dear, of whom you have often heard me speak. I think you were once with me when he dined at Brightwell House with a large party. He is a man who possesses a princely fortune, and whose whole life passes in a series of generous and obliging actions. His neighbours almost adore
 D 6 him.

him. There is not a peasant within ten miles of him, who would not, to use their own rustic phrase, “go through fire and water to serve him, by night or by day.” Though he lives in splendour proportioned to his fortune, it is without ostentation, and without extravagance; and never yet did he see anguish impressed on the countenance, even of a common acquaintance, without attempting to relieve it. Is a farmer distressed by bad seasons, or accidental losses? Mr. Somerville will assist him with his purse, or his credit. Is a labourer sinking under sickness and poverty? It is by Mr. Somerville he is ordered medical advice, and from his kitchen comfortable nourishment. And all this, and much more, is without ostentation. He thinks, that it is so far from being a matter of boast, that he does merely his duty.

Elizabeth.

Elizabeth. O, mamma! what an happy woman his wife must be!

Mrs. Woodfield. Alas! my dear Elizabeth, he has no wife; she has been dead many years, and left him two sons and a daughter.

Elizabeth. They must be happy then, mamma.

Mrs. Woodfield. I wish they were, my love, for the sake of their excellent father; but it is, unfortunately, quite otherwise.

Caroline. Yet I have often heard, aunt, that good parents make good children, and, of course, happy ones.

Mrs. Woodfield. It is a melancholy reflection, that this rule is by no means without exception. The eldest of Mr. Somerville's sons learned very early that he was heir to a very great fortune. At school, he was idle, dissipated, and expensive; these vices gathered strength at college.

He spent so much money there, that, notwithstanding his father's liberal allowance, he left it some thousands in debt, at a very early age; not being able to bear even the little restraint that merely belonging to a society laid upon his actions. His father, not knowing what to do with him, consented to his going abroad, when he made exactly the sort of tour described by Lord Chesterfield, and returned what is now called "a fine man about town." He plays very deep, runs into a thousand absurd excesses, and seldom or never sees his father, with whom he has no ideas in common, and who cannot help reflecting with regret, that his fortune will fall into the hands of a man who will disgrace his name.

Caroline. But his other son?—

Mrs. Woodfield. Turns out equally unworthy such a father. This young man, who was educated at home, in
confe-

consequence of the ill success of a public education with his elder brother, most unhappily took, by the neglect of his tutor, a turn for low company; he was unhappy, and under visible restraint, when he was not either in the stable or in the servants' hall. In the hope of breaking through these habits, his father sent him to Geneva; but they were already become inveterate. He married there an Englishwoman, whose obscure birth his father would have overlooked, if she had been a person of good character; as it was, this generous and tender parent forgave him, and, on his return to England, gave him a very handsome establishment; but his wife was so bad an economist, so extravagant, and so dissipated, that he soon became embarrassed. Mutual reproaches and recrimination ensued; they quarrelled, and parted.

Thus

Thus deprived of all prospect of future comfort in regard to his sons, Mr. Somerville turned towards his daughter, as his sole consolation. Alas! the promise of happiness, with which she had three years before been married, was already blighted. Her husband, a man of fashion, who, at the beginning of their union, had appeared extremely attached to her, had no longer any affection for her, nor did he take the trouble to wear even its semblance. His family, of which he was the only male heir, were displeased that she brought him no children, and treated her with coldness and neglect. She lost her health, and now passes almost all her time with her father, who endeavours, by tenderness and attention, to heal the wounds of a broken heart, which are, I fear, slowly, but certainly, condemning her to an early grave.

Eliza.

Elizabeth. How often, my dear mamma, you have told us that good people are always happy ; but it does not seem to be so in regard to poor Mr. Somerville.

Mrs. Woodfield. It does not *seem* to be so certainly ; yet, from what I know of this excellent man, I am persuaded that, suffering as he does, under the cruellest and most bitter of all misfortunes, parental disappointment, he feels internal serenity, of which not even *that* can rob him. Conscious of having done his duty towards his children, he has no reproaches to make himself. His example and his precepts have been invariably good ; and, however his cares have failed, he feels that they have been ever exerted for the advantage of the objects of his tenderness.

Such reflections, his religion, which promises him undisturbed felicity in a future

future state of existence, and the continual exercise of benevolence towards his fellow-creatures, on whom he is ever endeavouring to bestow the happiness he cannot taste himself, certainly give to him that tranquillity, which, with less strength of understanding, and less excellence of heart, he could not enjoy. How different are the sensations of his neighbour, the man we were before speaking of! Wrapped up in selfish enjoyments, and uninterested about every body, he is yet subject to continual displeasure and uneasiness. His pride and his self-love are continually mortified. He knows how little he deserves the respect of which he is so tenacious, and therefore perpetually suspects every body of a disposition to fail in it. He would fain be of consequence in the county where his property lies, and has tried, once or twice, to make

an impression of that consequence at public meetings; but having never cultivated the little understanding he possessed, he raised contempt by his blunders, instead of respect by his eloquence: and not bearing to become an object of ridicule, he quarrelled with those whom he thought saw him in that light, and then escaped, by mean submission, from the resentment his testiness brought upon him. But do not let us talk of him any more; let us rather contemplate the beauty of the landscape before us. Can imagination form any thing more lovely?

Caroline. Certainly, it is very fine.

Mrs. Woodfield. And yet, my dear Caroline, that cold assent makes me doubt, whether you are so entirely weaned from your former attachments, as not to think the coaches, that form a continual line from the end
of

of Piccadilly to the gate of Kensington Gardens, of a fine Sunday morning, at this season of the year, a more beautiful spectacle than the most romantic prospect you can behold, dressed in the vivid colours of spring.

Caroline. I must think it more amusing, aunt. Besides, I have heard you express a dislike to the affectation of being in raptures at prospects, and of making a parade of taste for *picturesque beauty*; I have heard you often say it was tiresome cant.

Mrs. Woodfield. I still believe it to be so with many people, and from them (for nothing is more easy than to detect the affectation) I always hear such exclamations with disgust. Just as I hear the raptures of Miss Crossbrook about music, when I know that she has no ear, and does not distinguish a country dance from a minuet. But
though

though an ear is not to be acquired, since it is a gift from nature, yet a taste for rural beauty certainly may ; and it is that taste I wish to give *you*, my children, who, from the narrowness of your fortunes, will probably pass your whole lives in the country. Believe me it is a sixth sense. The beautiful forms and varied foliage of the trees, the colouring given to the scenery by the different position of the sun, or the intervention of dark or illumined clouds ; the rich shadows of rocks, where they happen to ornament a country, their grotesque forms, with roots of trees starting from their deep recesses, or fern feathering their rugged sides ; grey ruins, in other times the habitations of grandeur, the bulwarks of the country, or the retreats of religious societies, now mouldering in decay, and much more beautiful in the eye of the landscape painter,

painter, than when in their former splendour; all these, as well as the cottage covered with vines, or half hid by hops; the blue smoke from the low chimney curling through the straggling fruit trees of their little gardens; such, and numberless other objects, which are neglected, or appear insipid to the common observer, become objects of interest and amusement to those who have learned to look at them with the eye of a painter or a poet.

Caroline. Alas! my dear aunt, I shall never be either.

Mrs. Woodfield. A poet I would not wish you to be; but I would have you cultivate your talents for drawing. It will now be a constant source of amusement and delight; and who knows, my dear Caroline, but it may hereafter be a resource against the inconveniencies of adversity? Let it not mortify your pride that I say this.

Recollect

Recollect that your poor father is a
 soldier; that every hour his life is ex-
 posed amid the dangers of the severest
 service; that he has not been able to
 lay up any thing; and that you would
 have only a small pension to support
 you. Why should you think your-
 self disgraced (as I see you do by your
 tears) at my naming this? Reflect,
 my child, how many persons, who
 were born in a higher rank of life
 than you were, even in the first classes
 of the nobility of France, are now re-
 duced to the necessity of labouring
 for their daily bread in a strange land;
 how many derive their support from
 the little ornamental acquirements of
 their more fortunate days. Nor is
 this confined to the natives of a coun-
 try where the overthrow of its ancient
 government has overwhelmed the no-
 bility in its ruins. Even in this pro-
 sperous land, how often do we see
 such

such sad vicissitudes of fortune ! How often does the luxury, the folly, or the misfortune of parents leave destitute and helpless young women exposed to insult, too often to infamy ! for those who cannot bear poverty will escape from it, however ruinous the means by which they escape. Come, my dear Caroline, do not let what I have said depress you too much. Believe me, I should not, to my brother's daughter, recommend any *prevoyance* of this sort, that I do not think equally applicable and proper for my own. Elizabeth, do you recollect that, some time in September, we took this walk, and returned by the ruins of Heardly Abbey ? You remember that you attempted, and not quite without success, to draw a view of it. But Caroline, who is a much greater proficient than you are, will, I am sure, give a much better
repre-

representation of it. Shall we make it in our way home, my dear, that you may judge how far it is a subject for your pencil? Hid among the woods that shadow the foot of this hill, on the confluence of three small brooks, which united there, fall into the river about a quarter of a mile below, it is a relic of antiquity very little known; and, unlike Netley, and some other equally celebrated monastic ruins, it has hitherto been neglected, alike by the pencil and the pen.

Caroline (sighing deeply, and trying to recover herself). I do not remember that I have ever seen the ruin of an abbey.

Mrs. Woodfield. This abbey was a small one, and perhaps, as a subject for the pencil, will appear less eligible now, than when Elizabeth and I last visited it; for it was then autumn, and the partially faded trees, the peculiar

gentle gloom of evening towards the end of September, were more in harmony with the melancholy air of the place, than the vivid green of April, or the bright sunshine of a spring morning.

Henrietta. Mamma, before we go, pray tell me whether you will grant me a favour?

Mrs. Woodfield. I dare say I shall; for I already fancy I know what you would ask. It is permission to do some kindness to this shepherd's little girl.

Henrietta. You have guessed right, mamma. Do you know, she has been telling me that her mother is dead; and that there are five of them. Poor little creatures! She is the eldest and they have no mother to take care of them, only her poor father, who is out all day with farmer Harris's flock; and sometimes they go all day without

without eating; and have nobody to mend their clothes, or do any thing in the world for them!

Ever alive to the voice of human misery, Mrs. Woodfield now inquired into the truth of this sad story, which she found Henrietta had not at all exaggerated. She desired the child to send the poor shepherd to her the next day, intending to do him some more permanent service, than bestowing on him mere present relief. This, however, she suffered Henrietta to do, by giving some money to the little girl, and they then pursued their walk.

Caroline, by degrees, re-assumed her cheerfulness. They reached Hardly Abbey, and wandered a-while among its beautiful ruins. Mrs. Woodfield pointed out the different purposes of the original building. "Here," said she, "was the refectory, there the chapel; these are supposed to have been

the cells of the monks. There were only, according to tradition, a superior, twelve brethren, and four lay brothers. They were of the order of St. Dominic; and, at the Reformation, this was, with other religious societies, dissolved, and the lands belonging to it were seized by the crown."

Henrietta. Mamma, what was the Reformation? Was it a revolution, such as people are always talking about now?

Mrs. Woodfield. No, my dear. Your sister Elizabeth will tell you, that the Reformation, which means the period when the English people protested against the superstitions of the church of Rome, (whence they acquired the name of Protestants,) was effected rather from the caprice of the sanguinary tyrant, Henry the Eighth, than from any regard

regard he had to the real interests of religion. The Pope, influenced by the Emperor, King of Spain, who was nephew to the unfortunate Catharine of Arragon, his first wife, refused to give his assent to the dissolution of that marriage; and to the King of England's espousing Anna Boleyn, one of her maids of honour, with whom he was enamoured. The consequence of this was, that Henry, impatient of control, though still a superstitious bigot, threw off the yoke, and emancipated his people from the impositions which had, till then, been fastened on them, in the abused name of religion.

Elizabeth. Mamma, there is a gentleman, he looks like a clergyman, surveying the ruins. See! he is sitting there on a piece of the broken wall!

Mrs. Woodfield. He has the appearance of a foreigner. Perhaps he

is one of the French priests, who is, I have heard, at W——. Caroline, have you courage to speak to him?

Caroline. It is so long since I have spoken to a native of France, that I know not how I shall acquit myself; I am almost afraid.

Mrs. Woodfield. Well, Caroline, I, who have been much less accustomed lately to speak to foreigners, will venture.

They then entered the principal area of the ruined building. On a mass of broken stone, covered with moss and rock-plants, they beheld the venerable figure of a man near seventy. He arose as they approached. Mrs. Woodfield spoke to him in French. He appeared flattered and obliged by her notice; and related to her, that having been driven from his country, with many other of his brethren, because he would not relinquish

quish his principles, or violate his allegiance; "I now," said he, "find a refuge with Mr. Carlisle, whom you may perhaps know."

Mrs. Woodfield. I do—and have always had an high opinion of his piety and benevolence.

The Abbé Bernard. But, notwithstanding I have found in him such a friend, I cannot submit to be burthensome to him, who is himself only the almoner and chaplain to the absent Lord D*****. I have, therefore, thought of attempting to get employed as a teacher of French and Italian; being fortunately master of the latter from a three years residence at Rome. Perhaps, Madam, it may be in your power to assist me in this research; I can venture to assure you of nothing but my diligence and my gratitude.

Mrs. Woodfield. Be assured, Sir, that I shall be most happy to be of any use to you in so laudable a purpose.

It was then, after some conversation, settled, that the Abbé Bernard, whose residence was at the distance of about three miles from that of Mrs. Woodfield, should attend the young ladies twice a-week, during the summer, which he thought he could easily do, notwithstanding his advanced age; for he was yet healthy, and, amidst all his misfortunes, cheerful and resigned. He hoped sometimes to be able to borrow a horse; and, upon the whole, he parted from his new acquaintances, highly satisfied with the circumstance of having met them.

Mrs. Woodfield was, on her part, not less satisfied, as she had found at
once

once an opportunity of doing some service to a worthy and respectable man, and of acquiring for her family, communication of knowledge which she had despaired of finding for them in their present situation.

As they passed homeward, she gave to Caroline and to Elizabeth, who eagerly listened to her, the outline of those events that had driven the clergy of France to seek a refuge in England; and she repeated to them the just and beautiful sentiment of Mrs. Hannah More, which has since been enforced by the pathetic exhortation of the authoress of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*. The three girls seemed equally eager to make the little sacrifices, so properly recommended, and were delighted with the idea of their new master.

Caroline. I did not forget my drawing, aunt, while I was listening to you. This is the sketch I have made of the remaining walls, and the stonework of the Gothic window opposite to which we sat, while you were conversing with the Abbé Bernard.

Mrs. Woodfield. Upon my word, Caroline, this is extremely well! Very free and well-drawn. A little more broken pieces about this side, and a few larger masses of stones, half-mantled with shrubs and ivy, in the fore-ground, and nothing can be better.

Caroline. Should there not be a human figure in it, Madam?

Mrs. Woodfield. It would be a great improvement. Before you finish the drawing, we will see whether we cannot introduce the venerable Abbé. Methought, when I first saw him, he
seemed

seemed most happily placed; could he be described by the pencil in the very attitude he then sat in; and could his figure, on paper, be made to represent the effect on it of the melancholy reflections which, I have no doubt, occupied him at that moment; when, from the recent destruction of religious houses in his own country, he was led, by accident, to contemplate the dilapidation of such buildings, which was effected, many years since, in ours. There is something in this reflection particularly mournful, I doubt not, to him. I recollect some lines (I believe, of Prior's) that are extremely applicable to the present unhappy state of the French clergy:

“ With irksome anguish then your priests
 “ shall mourn
 “ Their long neglected feasts; despair’d
 “ return,

- “ And sad oblivion of their solemn days ;
“ Henceforth their voices they shall only
“ raise
“ Louder to weep !

DIALOGUE IV.

THE NIGHTINGALE'S NEST.

THE beauty of the country now daily increased; the spring was mild and forward; Easter happened to fall very late, and the little boys, Harry and Edward, were at home for about ten days.

Their sister and their cousin were now employed for some hours every morning in repairing the children's linen, or making up new against their return to school, after these short holidays; but their walks were continued.

That of the first day after the boys arrival was through woods, which were already nearly in leaf. The re-
8 luctant

luculent oak and the timid ash, no longer resisting the warmth of the sun, were slowly unfolding their fresh leaves. The hedges and underwoods were everywhere green, and afforded concealment and shelter to an infinite number of birds, now busy in building their nest.

Listening to this wild concert, Mrs. Woodfield repeated from Thomson those lines in which he so well describes it.

— — “ Every copse

“ Deep tangled, tree irregular, and bush

" Bending with dewy moisture o'er the
" heads

" Of the coy quiristers that lodge within

" Are prodigal of harmony. The thrush

“ And woodlark o’er the kind contending
“ throng

" Superior heard, run through the sweetest
" length

" Of notes; while listening Philomela
" deigns

“ To let them joy, and purposes, in thought,

"Elate, to make her night excel their day."

" This,

"This, however," added she, "is not quite true; for it is certain that the nightingale sings like other birds during the day, but is then not distinguished so much from the rest; it is the night-song which, as Milton says, she

"Warbles at eve, when all the woods are
"still,"

that has, as much as her delicious notes, given her the pre-eminence, and made the nightingale particularly the favourite of the poets."

Hardly had she finished the sentence, when little Edward, who had wandered on before, came running back out of breath, without his hat, which he held in his hand, and in which, with delight sparkling in his eyes, he shewed his brother a nest of young unfledged birds.

Edward. Oh, Harry! see, my dear Harry, what a nest of birds!

The

The boys there, that have taken them, say they are nightingales. Mamma, tell me if I may buy them? They ask only sixpence for them. I will give you half of them, Harry.

Harry. Mamma, are they nightingales? May we have them?

Mrs. Woodfield. Indeed, I am afraid they *are* nightingales; and they are so tender, that you will never be able to raise them, so that to take them seems to be wanton cruelty.

Harry. But, mamma, these *are* taken already; and I am sure, if they are the tenderest little things in the world, my sister Henrietta will nurse them up. Don't you remember how she nursed the young goldfinches, which the cat threw down from the almond tree in the garden?

Mrs. Woodfield. Poor, little, unfortunate creatures! see how they pant! I have no other objection to
your

your buying them, my dear Harry, than as I think it encourages idle boys to continue their cruel robberies on the birds. But, however, as these poor nightingales *are* prisoners, I believe we may rescue them out of worse hands by taking them into ours. Can the boys there tell you where they took them from? Perhaps, after they are out of sight, we may be able to put them back into the tree where they were hatched.

[The two boys go, though with some little reluctance, and ask the peasant children to shew them the place.]

Edward (returning to his mother).
Mamma, the boys say they got this nest out of a bush of black thorn and holly, quite in the very middle of the wood, almost a mile off; and they don't believe they can find the place again for ever so much.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. Well, my loves, then pay for your purchase, and we will do the best we can with it. Your luckless little captives will soon be hungry, and we shall find nothing to give them here; therefore I would have you, Henrietta, and your two brothers, go home, and find a secure cage for your nightingales, which must still, however, remain in the nest; and let your maid, Rachel, assist you in feeding them, as she is fond of such things, and understands something of them. Caroline, Elizabeth, and I shall continue our walk, as I have some business at the village of Woodhampton, with a woman who is spinning for me.

[The children go back to the house.]

Elizabeth. See how carefully little Edward steps with his treasure.

Mrs. Woodfield. He will be an excellent nurse to them, and so will
Harry,

Harry, as far as their judgment goes; but these unfortunate objects of childish tenderness are not unfrequently killed by kindness. Neither of my little fellows have that disposition to cruelty which is said to be inherent in human nature, and which I have sometimes thought really is so, however degrading the idea may be.

Caroline. I am sure I have thought so very often, when I have seen how cruel the lower people are to animals.

Mrs. Woodfield. It is, indeed, not only humiliating, but is to my feelings so distressing, that I seldom have passed through the streets of London, Paris, or Bath, or almost any great town, without seeing some instance of human cruelty and animal suffering that has dwelt upon my mind, and affected my spirits for the rest of the day.

Caroline.

Caroline. And is it impossible to punish such horrid monsters?

Mrs. Woodfield. The sufferings of these miserable victims of human barbarity have not been, and therefore, I suppose, cannot be sufficiently attended to by the legislature. An hackney coachman may whip his galled and tired horse with impunity, though the exhausted animal has not strength to execute the task his brutal driver demands of him; for what positive law is there against a man's whipping his horses? or how shall his management of them be regulated? The monsters called bullock hunters are sometimes fined; but it seems as if the horrid delight of such savages was greater than their fear of punishment, for the evil has never been lessened. Were I a man, I am persuaded I should turn knight-errant in defence of the mere animal, against what are improperly called reason-

reasonable beings. How beautifully does the inimitable Cowper treat this subject! Speaking of the domestic animals dependent on man, he says,

- “ They prove, too often, at how dear a
 “ rate
 “ He sells protection. Witness at his foot
 “ The spaniel dying, for some venial fault,
 “ Under dissection of the knotted scourge :
 “ Witness the patient ox, with stripes and
 “ yells
 “ Driven to the slaughter, goaded, as he
 “ runs,
 “ To madness: while the savage at his
 “ heels
 “ Laughs at the frantic sufferer's fury,
 “ spent
 “ Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.
 “ He, too, is witness, noblest of the train
 “ That wait on man, the flight-performing
 “ horse ;
 “ With unsuspecting readiness he takes
 “ His murderer on his back ; and push'd all
 “ day,
 “ With bleeding sides, and flanks that heave
 “ for life,
 “ To the far distant goal arrives—and dies.

“ Does

“ Does Law, so jealous in the cause of man,
“ Denounce no doom on the delinquent?
“ None.”

And, alas ! this is one of those evils that satire, excellent and just even as this, can do but little to correct ; for, as some periodical paper, (I think the World,) in one of its essays, observes, coachmen, draymen, carmen, and drovers do not read essays, yet I have often fancied that something might be done to soften the cruel hearts of the lower classes of people, if any person of abilities would adapt remonstrances to their comprehension, and teach them to fear hereafter, such punishments as they now inflict, in dreadful retaliation.

They were by this time arrived at a village, whose few straggling houses edged the extensive wood, and in a neat cottage found a decently dressed woman, whose husband was a flax-dresser,

and who was employed by Mrs. Denzil to spin for her. She desired the woman to bring out some flax in its raw state ; described the process of making it into tow, fit for spinning, and then made each of the girls endeavour to spin a thread. Not far from thence, in the same village, was a loom ; they there saw it woven into sheeting, and other coarse linen. Their walk home was designedly varied. Mrs. Woodfield led them across a rustic bridge, and along the banks of a rapid stream that turned a paper-mill, into which they entered, and saw the whole operation of making several kinds of paper. She then explained to them the materials and means by which it was made ; and bade them carry their imaginations back, from the stalk of the flax they had seen, bearing a blue and simple flower trembling on its slender summit, through all its changes
and

and modifications, till it contributes to make a sheet of paper.

This speculation amused them for the rest of their walk. On their arrival at home, Caroline and Elizabeth were agreeably surpris'd by a card they found upon their table, inviting the whole family to a ball, given by the officers of a regiment quartered in a neighbouring town.

Pleasure danced in the eyes of Caroline, when she found Mrs. Woodfield intended to return an answer that they would accept this invitation. Nor was Elizabeth much less delighted. An immediate consultation was held, as to the arrangements necessary, and Mrs. Woodfield, leaving them to enjoy this antepast of pleasure, (all that life's deceptions frequently allow us to taste, and which is at their ages so keenly tasted,) went to inspect the little menagerie of the
three

three younger children, lately increased by their nightingales, about which they were all anxiously employed. It was more necessary to repress their ill-judged solicitude, than to reprove them for carelessness of their little charge. But desirous of teaching them to reflect, she made use of the present opportunity; when the eldest of the two boys said, "Mamma, I do not believe these little birds would be more comfortable if they were with their own mother."

Mrs. Woodfield. Admitting it to be so, my dear Harry, (though I greatly fear it is not the fact,) pray tell me what you think is the opinion of *their own* mother?

Harry. Perhaps she may be a little sorry, when she comes back and finds the nest gone.

Mrs. Woodfield. Harry! how do you think *I* should feel, if, on my return

turn from a journey, where I had been to procure money to pay for the subsistence of my children, I found my house vacant; and that some tyrant, whom I could not pursue or punish, had taken them from me, and condemned them to imprisonment or death? Tell me, Harry; and do you, Edward, tell me, how do you think your mamma would feel?

Harry (looking earnestly and sorrowful). Certainly, mamma, you would cry, and be very unhappy.

Mrs. Woodfield. Just so must the mother bird feel, when she returns and finds the vacant bough from which her nest has been torn. But, to impress this more forcibly on your memory, Harry, you shall write these lines in your copy-book:

“ Oft, when returning with her loaded bill,

“ Th’ astonish’d mother finds a vacant nest,

“ By

" By the hard hands of unrelenting clowns
 " Robb'd; to the ground the vain provision
 " falls;
 " Her pinions ruffle, and, low drooping,
 " scarce
 " Can bear the mourner to the poplar
 " shade."

Edward (with tears starting in his eyes). Mamma, if I had thought about what the old bird must feel, I would have made the boys I bought these of, put the nest back again.

Mrs. Woodfield. If you had done so, my dear little boy, it would hardly, in this case, have answered your humane intention; for those idle boys, as soon as you were out of sight, would have taken the nest again, and have sold the poor birds to some other person. What I mean is, not only to induce you to take care of them, since they now depend on you, but to engage you, in every case, to put yourself

yourself in the place of whatever creature you are about to injure or oppress; that you may acquire an habit of saying to yourself, How should I like to be treated thus? What should I suffer if I were in the place of the cat we are wantonly hunting with our terriers? of the rooks which we are wounding with our arrows? of the ducks we are setting the spaniels at? Whoever learns early in life to make these reflections, will never have a reproach to make himself on the score of humanity, either towards the animal, or the human species.

Harry. But, mamma, grown people hunt, and shoot, and fish, and do not seem to think there is any cruelty in it!

Mrs. Woodfield. So far as it becomes necessary to kill for our support, the animals Providence has allotted to us, there is nothing criminal in it;

but

but to prolong their tortures is highly so, or wantonly to destroy any living creatures that are innoxious. For to-morrow's task, Edward shall write out for me these lines, on the subject of inferior animals, and even reptiles and insects :

— “ If man's convenience, health,
 “ Or safety, interfere, his rights and claims
 “ Are paramount, and must extinguish
 “ theirs ;
 “ Else they are all, the meanest things
 “ that are,
 “ As free to live, and to enjoy that life,
 “ As God was free to form them at the
 “ first,
 “ Who, in his sovereign wisdom, made
 “ them all.
 “ Ye, therefore, who love mercy, teach
 “ your sons
 “ To love it too.”

And now, my dear boys, you must release your sister, Henrietta, for she is going out to-morrow evening, and

I fancy has some little preparation to make. My dear Henrietta, follow me.

[A room above stairs—CAROLINE and ELIZABETH consulting about their dress.]

Caroline. I dare say I shall look as horribly old-fashioned as possible; it is five months since I have seen any creature who could tell me what *they* wear.

Mrs. Woodfield (entering). "What they wear?" There is no term in the whole cant of frivolity that is half so disgusting to me as that. Who are *they*, my dear Caroline, to whose mode of dress you are determined to pay such obsequious deference?

Caroline (confused). Nay, aunt, I mean people that—people that are in the world, you know—that is—people—in short

Mrs. Woodfield. That are not twaddlers, and quizzes, and grubs, and goodies, and half an hundred other
odd

odd names, that you give to the folks you usually meet with in the country. Tell me now, Caroline, if it would not have afforded you great pleasure, had you known of this ball soon enough, to have written slyly to your fashionable friend, Miss Freemantle, to have sent you down some very whimsical dress, with a new name, such as you imagine, having never been seen in this country, would make people stare?

Caroline. I should not have ventured to have done it without your leave, aunt.

Mrs. Woodfield. But, however, it would have given you pleasure?

Caroline. Certainly; I should not like to appear anywhere but properly dressed, if I could help it.

Mrs. Woodfield. And after all, what is so proper for a young person of your age, as perfect simplicity and neat-

ness? You are still in mourning, and would not, I hope, have thrown it off an hour sooner on account of this public meeting.

Caroline. But all I am afraid of is, that if one is not a little fashionable, one looks vulgar.

Mrs. Woodfield. It is infinitely more vulgar to appear at such an assembly over-drest. Believe me, my dear, mere dress contributes nothing to that look of elegance, or, if you will, of superiority, that you seem so jealous of. You will be convinced of this, if you should see to-morrow evening, as you probably will, a Lady, named Scrafton, who is the first and the finest at all our rural assemblies; she is the wife of a man who has a small fortune in this country, but is often in London, as he is engaged in some business there. This woman, who is fat, short, crooked, and coarse, and
who

who has neither the manners, the air, nor the voice of a gentlewoman, is the greatest adept in fashions I ever saw. She runs about for a week before the birth-days, from millener to millener, to see the ladies' clothes, and then imagines something like the most remarkable, with which to amaze her country neighbours. Her clothes are made up in every variety of extravagant fashion, and each habili-ment has some foreign name that she cannot pronounce. Without the least regard to proportion or propriety, she dresses out her unfortunate person in the wildest mode of the wildest girl of fashion, and the effect is, that she creates envy in the weak, and pity in the wise; and while she thinks herself on the very pinnacle of politeness and elegance, I see some look upon her as a mad woman, and all consider her as a fool. Have you any ambi-

tion, Caroline, to share with such a woman as Mrs. Scrafton, the stare of rustic amazement?

Caroline. Dear aunt, can you suppose I have?

Mrs. Woodfield. Let us hear no more, then, of wishes to know what "*they wear.*" My mantua-maker, who makes for the attornies' and apothecaries' wives in the next market town, often forces me to smile, by advising me to have my gown made so and so, and assuring me *they wear* them so: and when I ask *who?* she simperingly informs me, that Miss Kitty Puffins, the daughter of Mr. Puffins, an eminent oilman in Carnaby Market, has been down to see her relations, the Miss Clutterbucks, and gave the mantua-maker, Miss Gibson, leave to look at her clothes, which were made up new to come into the country, "*quite in taste.*"

Such

Such are the rural histories of *fashions*. The belles who derive their information from Miss Puffins of Carnaby Market, will take the lead in elegance, perhaps for five miles round, till Sir James J*****'s family arrive from London, after the birthday, and then the ton of articles à-la-Puffins, will be entirely superseded by the knowledge acquired from the happier few who are admitted to contemplate the superior elegance of the ladies of that house.

Do you think, Caroline, such ephemeron triumphs as these are worth a moment's thought? I am far, however, from wishing you entirely to decline appearing what is called in the fashion; such affectation would be as ridiculous on one hand, as running into its wildest excesses is on the other. A young woman should dress as the persons of her age dress, but without sacrificing decency, common sense,

or proportion. Nothing, perhaps, is a more glaring absurdity, among all the weakneses women are charged with, than the undistinguishing avidity with which women of all ages and figures run into modes of dress, that cannot become them all, and probably disfigure five out of six. Some slender girl of fashion imagines, in the caprice of imputed perfections, a manner of dressing which shall shew every one of those perfections. It succeeds; the men compliment, the Misses envy, and the mob wonder. In a few days, the fat red-faced matron of fifty; the dwarfish Miss, who has owed her little consequence to her heels and her head; the round snug damsel, as thick as she is long; and the *genteel young lady*, that has lived on vinegar till she is reduced to a study for an anatomist; all follow the fashion: but hardly are they established

blished in it, before some other, more preposterous, succeeds; and the former,

“ Like the baseless fabric of a vision,

“ Leaves not a wreck behind ;”

unless it be in that description of persons who, in Shakespeare's time, were called

“ The velvet guards, and Sunday citizens.”

I have often thought, that if it were possible to have a set of dolls dressed in the fashions of the last two hundred years, it would be an amusing spectacle, and not without its use, as a lesson to human vanity. The modes are now forgotten and the names of the triflers who invented them are forgotten too; the only memorial that remains of either exists, perhaps, in some book, where they are accidentally alluded to, and which the commentary of the
anti-

antiquarian and the critic may have explained.

It should be a lesson to the spangled butterfly of the passing day, and it should teach her the superiority of intellect over beauty, when she reflects, that the charms of so many lovely women live now only in the memory of mankind by the poets who have celebrated their names. Even the beautiful Lady Coventry is obliged to Mason for telling us what she was. "The liquid lustre of her eyes" is remembered but faintly by those who yet remember her. There is a sonnet of Drayton's, addressed to a Lady, whose merit he glories in being able to rescue from oblivion, which is apposite to this topic. It is not so polished as modern poetry; but is highly expressive of his opinion of the power of poesy, and of those objects of transient admiration,

miration, of whom it has been said,

" They had no poet, and they died."

DRAYTON'S *Sixth Sonnet.*

" How many foolish, paltry, painted things,

" That now in coaches trouble every

" street,

" Shall be forgotten—whom no poet sings—

" Ere they are well wrapped in their

" winding sheet;

" But I to thee eternity shall give,

" When nothing else remaineth of these

" days,

" And queens hereafter shall be glad to live

" Upon the alms of thy superfluous praise.

" Virgins and matrons, reading thus my

" rhymes,

" Shall be so much delighted with thy

" story,

" That they shall grieve they lived not in

" these times,

" To have seen thee, their sex's greatest

" glory.

" For thou shalt soar above the vulgar

" throng,

" And still survive in my immortal song!"

DIALOGUE V.

THE LILY OF THE VALLEY.

THE ball so anxiously expected was over. Caroline, who had formed a very different idea of an assembly of that sort in the country, had been surprised to see a great number of fashionable people, as well as many who thought themselves so; and that, far from being considered as something extraordinary, from the style of life she had formerly been in, and her reputed accomplishments, nobody seemed particularly to think about her. She piqued herself extremely on the superiority of her dancing, having been taught many years by the most fashionable masters; but she had the mortification of ob-

serving, that the nymphs of the country town, who had received only a few lessons from an itinerant master, that travels the country in a "a chaise and one," thought themselves quite as expert, and, for aught she could see, were quite as much applauded. Caroline, however, endeavoured to conceal her disappointment; but her aunt, who had watched her narrowly the whole evening, had not failed to observe it. When they met the next morning at breakfast, the people they had seen the night before were, of course, the subject of their discourse; and when Mrs. Woodfield came down, she found her niece and her eldest daughter talking very earnestly, allowing some to be tolerable, but declaring that some were odious, and others absolutely horrible. This conversation she did not check as she entered; and, after
a mo-

a momentary silence, Caroline was too full of the occurrences of the ball not to renew it.

Caroline. We were saying, aunt, that the Mrs. Scrafton you described to us, as being always so over-dressed, was the most horrible fright we ever saw.

Mrs. Woodfield. Yet you allow that she was most fashionably dressed, and you might see that half the women envied her superiority in that respect, while they were heartily glad to see her look so ugly; and consoled themselves, that though their dresses were not like hers, immediately new from London, they looked infinitely better than she did, with all her expensive novelties.

Caroline. To be sure, there are people to whom nothing can give a look of fashion.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. But what do you think of Mrs. Bannerman, and her sister Miss Fanshaw?

Caroline. Humph! They are prettyish looking women.

Mrs. Woodfield. They are reckoned very great beauties, and, besides, people of the very first world. Fed by the flattery and adulation of a weak mother, who, though very plain herself, insisted upon her daughters being celebrated toasts, they entered upon the world, convinced they were so; and it sometimes happens in this case, as in others, that presumption and assurance carry their points, when sense and diffidence would fail. Arrogant and superficial, Mrs. Bannerman, though married, is still a coquet; and you see how the men flatter her, and what ridiculous airs she gives herself. I was acquainted with her when I lived in town, (though

now

now we hardly curtsy to each other,) and I have seen men whom she was most desirous of attracting, suffer her to succeed, so far as to appear to be struck with her, and assiduous about her for half an hour; but with no other purpose in the world but to make her ridiculous, by the fine attitudes into which she put herself, and the affected grimaces she made.

Caroline. I never saw such an insolent proud-looking woman; she seems to think every body beneath her.

Mrs. Woodfield. And she really does think so of every body, unless it be a few of her own associates. A rage for rank has often made her more laughed at than her other foibles. But she is, in every part of her character, a woman I dislike. Without any knowledge, she is always talking and dictating; is very
little

little scrupulous about truth, and has a heart the most callous that I ever observed a woman to possess.

Elizabeth. Her sister is a great deal handsomer than she is.

Mrs. Woodfield. And her sister would be infinitely more amiable, if she did not imitate her; but unfortunately, seeing how well the bold and dashing manners of the elder have succeeded in the very material object of getting her a rich husband, Miss Fanshaw pursues the same line of conduct, with a character essentially different, and a person soft and interesting; in vanity, however, she is not inferior to her sister.

Caroline. I could not help observing that she seemed to think it a mighty condescension in them to dance; and when they *did*, marched up to the top of the room, as if they
had

had been the daughters of a peer at least.

Mrs. Woodfield. And yet the daughter of a city knight would have put them down, had such a one been there; so poor are the advantages of rank, and so ridiculous is it to assume it. Another instance of rudeness I remarked, which was, that having gone down the dance the two first couples, they had no sooner reached the bottom than they sat down.

Caroline and Elizabeth speaking together. But you were extremely angry with us

Mrs. Woodfield. Speak one at a time, dear girls, if you please.

Elizabeth. You were angry with my cousin and me, mamma, for sitting down just at last, when we were quite tired, and when there

were only four couple of trumpery people, and Henrietta, and some other children, dancing.

Mrs. Woodfield. What do you mean, pray, by trumpery people? If they were good enough for you to dance down the dance with, they were certainly good enough for you to stand up while *they* also went down. And as for your term, *trumpery people*, do not let me hear it again, Elizabeth. The only trumpery people I know of, are those who pretend to what they cannot properly reach, in finery and appearance. Such people are really trumpery; for they are gaudy but worthless. Very certainly, however, even such folly, on the part of strangers in a public room, is no reason for rudeness on the part of others, and nothing can justify ill-breeding. But, in this particular instance, I had another reason for checking

checking you and your cousin for your rude inattention. One of the young ladies who was coming down the dance, and who came down late, because her modesty and diffidence did not allow her to put herself at the top, was Miss Harley, who certainly is of a much better family than almost any one in the room, and who, in my opinion, has lost none of the respect that is due to that advantage, from her being totally destitute of fortune, and dependent on the bounty of another. Elizabeth, you know her story; where was your heart when you could treat her with contempt? Your cousin is more excusable, who did not know her.

Elizabeth (confused). I am sure, mamma, I never meant it;—upon my word, I did not know it was Miss Harley; or, at least, I did not think of it.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. No!—It was seeing her among the set at the bottom, with two or three of the people of the town, and the little girls and boys, that made you, without reflection, treat her with the same contempt as Mrs. Bannerman and her sister treated you, who probably, if they deigned to think about you at all, considered you not only as children, but as so much their inferiors, that it was not worth their while to give themselves the trouble of remaining in their places till you passed them. See another instance of the perpetual inattention I complain of, to the first principle of all moral rectitude; how ill you can bear yourself to submit to affronts which you unfeelingly inflict on others.

Elizabeth (the tears streaming from her eyes). I will make an apology to Miss Harley with all my heart,

mamma ; I am sure I would not have hurt her for the world.

Mrs. Woodfield. I shall think no more of it now ; but let it hereafter be a rule with you, never to do an ill-bred action, because you believe the people you are with, are either inferior, or younger, than yourself. In a public room, every person is on an equality, though precedence is never denied to those who have really a right to it. But now we will put off the rest of our remarks till after dinner, and take a walk. You both look fatigued, and nothing will help to recover you so soon as the fresh air, perfumed, as it is this morning, by multitudes of flowers. As the Abbé is coming at two o'clock, we can go no farther than the garden.

[They go thither.]

Mrs. Woodfield. Come with me to my hyacinths. Ah ! they will soon be

all

all blown! How beautiful they are already, and how well they will repay me for the pains I took with them in the winter!

Caroline. I think, aunt, auriculas are still prettier.

Mrs. Woodfield. I am divided in my affections, and can hardly tell you which I prefer. But I am indeed an enthusiast in my passion for flowers; and I think the happiest hours to which I can carry my recollection in thinking of my past life, are those when I was a girl of ten or eleven years old, and was suffered, nay encouraged, to cultivate myself a little spot of ground, in a part of a garden of my father's, appropriated entirely to flowers. How deep, even at this distance of time, does the impression remain of those simple objects which then charmed my senses! Against the wall there was a double pomegranate,

G 2 mingling

mingling its scarlet blossoms, almost too dazzling to look at, with those of a broad-leaved myrtle. A passion-flower interwove itself on one side; on the other the double purple clematis. Do you know, girls, that I believe I could now draw every flower, just as they were disposed in my border?

Elizabeth. Mamma, I do not remember that you remarked this auricula yesterday morning; I think it is the finest among them all. Pray, of what country are these beautiful flowers?

Mrs. Woodfield. The auricula is, I believe, the cowslip of the Alps. It is one of those flowers which owes much of its beauty and variety to the skill of the gardener. As weakness and folly break out even in the indulgence of the most innocent amusements, there have been people, who have gone to such expences in the cultivation of these flowers, as greatly to have injured

jured their fortunes. But this mania has prevailed still more in regard to tulips; and was once found to be so destructive in Holland, that the folly was checked by an act of the Legislature, but not, however, till it had occasioned the ruin of many families.

Elizabeth. I recollect some story told by Pope, is it not? of a Quaker destroying some favourite flower, to which he thought his neighbour was too much attached.

Mrs. Woodfield. I believe you are right; we will look for the lines when we go in. In the mean time, try, my dear, to recollect Thomson's pretty catalogue of flowers:

Elizabeth.

“ Along these blushing borders, bright;

“ with dew,

“ And in yon mingled wilderness of flowers,

“ Fair-handed Spring unbosoms every

“ grace,

- “ Throws out the snow-drop and the
“ crocus first,
“ The daisy, primrose, violet, darkly blue,
“ And polyanthus of unnumber'd dyes,
“ The yellow wall-flower stain'd with iron
“ brown,
“ And lavish stock that scent the garden
“ round.
“ From the soft wing of vernal breezes,
“ sheds
“ Anemonies; auriculas enrich'd
“ With shining meal o'er all their velvet
“ leaves;
“ And full ranunculus of glowing red;
“ Then come the tulip race, where beauty
“ plays
“ Her idle freaks; from family diffus'd
“ To family, as flies the father's dust,
“ The varied colours run; and, while they
“ break
“ On the charmed eye, the exulting florist
“ marks,
“ With secret pride, the wonders of his
“ hand.”

Mrs. Woodfield. You observe that
he mentions the art of the gardener
in

in breaking, as it is called, the tulip, which is done by changing the ground, and other means, with which I am but imperfectly acquainted. Originally, tulips are of that dull reddish purple, which you sometimes observe among the common ones in the borders of the shrubbery.

Caroline. And, after all the pains and expence that is bestowed upon them, they have no smell, and are certainly a shewy, but not a very pretty, flower.

Mrs. Woodfield. I am quite of your opinion, Caroline. A bed of tulips is a gay sight, and sometimes the flowers are elegantly striped; but, upon the whole, it is a plant for which I have no great partiality. Here is one I love much better; this modest unassuming Lily of the Valley. Some years ago, I was much in the society of two young women of very different dispositions. One of

them, like Mrs. Bannerman, was vain, arrogant, and daring. She painted high, and never scrupled to adopt the most extravagant fashions, which she thought would shew to advantage a person of which she was ridiculously vain. And to such an excess did she carry this, that she was frequently insulted in the streets, being taken for one of those unhappy women who walk there for the purpose of being remarked and followed. Far, however, from being mortified at these affronts, she triumphed in them, and believed they were occasioned solely by the power that her charms had over all sorts of people.

The other was mild, generous, and unassuming. Less striking at first sight, she always won upon those who saw her a second time, while her cousin, Maria, (for they were near relations,) excited something like wonder

wonder the first time, but ever afterwards disgust. Though to correct the one was utterly hopeless, I wished (for I loved her extremely) to praise, without flattery, the modest merit of the other.

I believe I can repeat the sonnet I wrote to her.

SONNET.

Miranda! mark, where, shrinking from the
 gale,
 Its silken leaves yet moist with morning
 dew
 That fair faint flower, the Lily of the Vale,
 Droops its meek head, and looks, methinks,
 like you!
 Wrapped in its modest veil of tender green,
 Its snowy bells a soft perfume dispense,
 And bending, as reluctant to be seen,
 In simple loveliness it soothes the sense.
 With bosom bar'd to meet the garish day,
 The glaring tulip, gaudy, undismay'd
 Offends the eye of taste, that turns away,
 And seeks the Lily in her fragrant shade.

So, in unconscious beauty, pensive, mild,
Miranda still shall charm—Nature's inge-
nuous child.

Elizabeth. Pray tell me, mamma, whether one of these ladies was mortified, and the other improved?

Mrs. Woodfield. That is not in my power; for the former was too proud, too much wrapped up in a perfect conviction of her own excellence, and a sovereign contempt for the opinion of others, to shew that she even understood the allusion; the other, soon after, plunged into the vortex of fashionable dissipation. I lost sight of her; and I heard that her character soon lost its charms; but that having heard the pensive cast of countenance and mild retiring manners suited her figure best, she not unfrequently put on the semblance of what she once was, and became affected and ridiculous; for next to the affectation of
looking

looking and behaving like a man, which one now so frequently sees, is the pretence to excessive sensibility; that sort

“ Which would weep o’er the withering
“ leaf of a rose,”

and is tremblingly alive at every pore. But, perhaps, what has given me so great an aversion to this, is the circumstance of my happening to know two women who have it to a ridiculous degree. One, who in company is *so* soft, *so* feminine, *so* delicate, *so* gentle, that she can hardly prevail upon herself to speak so as to be heard across the room, fairly broke her husband’s heart, from the violence and acrimony of her temper. The other has tears at command; will enact a perfect Niobe, if her dear worthy friend is under any affliction; but, amidst her consolatory tenderness, will ask the friend, if it be loss of fortune he

G 6. deplores;

deplores; whether, poor good man! he does not think how, in his cooler moments, that he owes his misfortune a *little* (honest worthy soul!) to his own trifling oversights and indiscretions. If her friend laments the death of a child, this sympathising dear affectionate woman will mingle her tears with the mourner, aye a fountain full; but, in the midst of pumping them up, she will gently hint to the agonized mother, that the poor dear baby that's gone was, poor thing! never, in *her* opinion, very healthy, and she rather fears was badly nursed, and somewhat neglected, and exposed too much to cold air, which might undermine, dear precious thing! its little delicate constitution.

To such a woman as this, I have frequently been tempted to say, If this is your tenderness and your friend-

ship, for Heaven's sake give me rudeness and enmity.

Caroline. Oh ! I know such people. But, tell me, aunt, who was your Miranda ? I cannot help being sorry she altered so much.

Mrs. Woodfield. No matter who she was ; she is no longer the same person. But here is the Abbé Bernard coming across the meadow, we must go in.

Caroline. Do you know, aunt, he thinks, that in a very few lessons more I shall be able to read the different Italian poets, as well as I now do Goldoni's comedies.

Mrs. Woodfield. I am very glad to hear it ; for of all those acquirements that are called accomplishments, there is none that, were I now a young person, would excite my ambition so much as the acquisition of languages. It not only makes a person useful on a
thousand

thousand occasions, but enlarges their minds, and goes a great way towards curing them of narrow and disgraceful prejudices. If ever we should go to Italy

Caroline. To Italy!—Oh! my dear aunt, have you really thoughts of going thither?

Mrs. Woodfield. Yes; I assure you I have often very serious thoughts of it.

Caroline. And should I go with you?

Mrs. Woodfield. Certainly, my dear Caroline; if your father continues to entrust you with me, wherever *I* go *you* shall go. But do you think yourself well qualified for a traveller? To travel too, with persons whose finances will not allow them to enjoy all those advantages that obviate the inconveniences of travelling?

Caroline.

Caroline. Dear aunt, why should you suspect me of being less able to submit to these difficulties than any other person? You know I was once in France with my mamma.

Mrs. Woodfield. You were then a child; and children, while they are amused by variety, are unconscious of difficulties. But what makes me believe you now would less easily submit to them is, that you are naturally fastidious; this place is cold, and another place is hot; here one is dull, and there one is plagued with *boring* people; you are afraid in bad roads, and impatient at inns. Now all these disagreeable things, and probably many others yet more disagreeable, would occur to you between England and Rome.

Caroline. Oh! but the delight of seeing different places, and pictures, and statues that one reads so much about!

about ! Besides, it is such an advantage, and gives one *such an air*, to have it to say, when one returns, that one has been at Rome !

Mrs. Woodfield. And it is precisely that *air* I should fear your assuming, for nothing is half so absurd and disgusting. A travelled man, who tells you of himself and his travels, is only second in tiring his audience, to him who tells of his wisdom and œconomy at home. Recollect how Mr. D. whom we used often to meet at Sir J. E——'s, incurred ridicule, by beginning, on all occasions, "I remember when I was abroad;" or, "That puts me in mind when I was at Rome." But if it be tiresome and offensive in a man, it is much worse in a young woman. And I do not know that any affectation ever displeased me more, than that of two girls, the daughters of a naval officer, who

who having been four or five years on the Continent, to finish as it is called their education, not only affected foreign manners on their return, but declared, that they found it extremely difficult to accustom themselves to converse in "the vulgar language of the English." This folly is happily exposed by Lord Chesterfield in one of his papers of "The World."

Henrietta. Mamma, only look at the lilacs, the double blossom peaches, double blossom cherries, and these shrubs with yellow blossoms.

Mrs. Woodfield. Scorpion scennas. Or do you mean the blossom of the barberry; or the long streaming tassels of the laburnum?

Henrietta. All, I believe, I mean; for there they are all. Oh, how lovely the shrubbery is! What should any body want to go out of England for,

for, when every thing is so sweet and delicious !

Mrs. Woodfield. Alas ! little girl, one cannot always walk in a shrubbery either in England or any other country ; and if one could, they are not always so pleasant as at this season.

But that puts me in mind to ask if you have learned those lines I gave you yesterday, so well describing the beauty of a shrubbery, and which you omitted saying this morning ?

Henrietta. Indeed, mamma, I have learned them since I have been out ; and you will say I can give you the catalogue of shrubs, as correct as Elizabeth gave hers of flowers.

—— “ Laburnum *, rich

“ In streaming gold ; syringa, ivory pure ;

“ The scentless † and the scented rose ; this

“ red,

* Cowper's Task.

† The guelder rose, a viburnum.

“ And

- " And of an humbler growth, the other
 " tall,
 " And throwing up into the darkest gloom
 " Of neighb'ring cypress, or more sable
 " yew,
 " Her silver globes, light as the foamy
 " surf
 " That the wind severs from the broken
 " wave;
 " The lilac, various in array, now white,
 " Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now
 " set
 " With purple spikes pyramidal, as if
 " Studios of ornament, yet unresolv'd
 " What hue she most approv'd, she chose
 " them all;
 " Copious of flowers the woodbine, pale and
 " wan,
 " But well compensating her sickly looks
 " With never-cloying odours; early and
 " late
 " Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm
 " Of flowers, like flies, cloathing her tender
 " rods,
 " That scarce a leaf appears; mezerian too,
 " Though leafless, well attir'd and thick
 " beset

" With

- " With blushing wreaths investing every
 " spray;
 " Althea with the purple eye; the broom,
 " Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloy'd,
 " Her blossoms; and, luxuriant above all,
 " The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant
 " sweets,
 " The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd
 " leaf
 " Makes more conspicuous, and illumines
 " more
 " The bright profusion of her scatter'd
 " stars."

Mrs. Woodfield. Very well, Henrietta. You have repeated it extremely properly, not only with "*good emphasis and discretion*," but as if you understood it.

And now, to continue my pleasure, let us acquit ourselves well in our lessons from the good Abbé; and to complete my satisfaction, as soon as we have done that, you shall sing together, while Caroline plays the accompaniment *part* of that beautiful

beautiful little ode to the May, from
the botanic garden of Dr. Darwin.

" Born in yon blaze of orient sky,

" Sweet May! thy radiant form unfold;

" Unclose thy blue voluptuous eye,

" And wave thy shadowy locks of gold.

" For thee, the fragrant zephyrs blow,

" For thee, descend the sunny shower;

" The rills in softer murmurs flow,

" And brighter blossoms gem the bower.

" Warm with new life, the glittering

" throngs,

" On quivering fin and rustling wing,

" Delighted join their votive songs,

" And hail thee — Goddess of the

" Spring."

DIALOGUE VI.

MISS HARLEY.

Mrs. Woodfield.

FROM the breakfast table this morning, my dear girls, we will go into Wolfs Wood. Nothing can, in my opinion, be more delightful than a wood at this time of the year, when the trees are all in leaf, and clad in their early verdure.

Elizabeth. But, mamma, why do they call it Wolfs Wood? It is enough to make one afraid, if one did not know that there are no wolves in England.

Mrs. Woodfield. You would not have reason to be afraid though the
wood

wood were in France, where there are wolves.

Henrietta. You mean wicked men, mamma.

Mrs. Woodfield. Of those, unhappily, there are now enough; men to whom wolves, if they could understand the comparison, might be shocked to be compared. It is not, however, of figurative but of real wolves that I now speak.

Henrietta. But, mamma, they eat people, do they not?

Mrs. Woodfield. You remember, probably, that one of them eat little Red Riding Hood, after a dialogue of some length?

Henrietta. Mamma, now, that is merely laughing at me.

Mrs. Woodfield. Well then; to answer you seriously, my little girl, I will tell you all I know of this terrific subject. There are wolves in every

part of France ; but in the northern Provinces they are few in number, and feeble. I have heard, that unless they are hungry enough to associate in troops, which never happens but in very severe seasons, (and, I suspect, very rarely even then,) they are easily frightened from their attacks on the fold, by a girl or an old woman. The shepherds, however, of Normandy, instead of having stationary huts, such as we were in the other day on the hill, have little moveable hovels, something like a thatched cart, which they wheel about with them as shelter from the weather, when they are obliged to remain in places where they apprehend mischief from these ugly animals ; a proof that such animals are sometimes troublesome. The uneducated in all countries are alike ; they love the marvellous, and are stimulated by the gloomy, the horrible,

rible, and the improbable : and it is to that spirit I imputed a story I heard at Rouen, in the severe winter, the end of 1784, and beginning of 1785; when I was told, a wolf or wolves had devoured a centinel on his post in one of the fauxbourg, and left nothing but his musket and his breast-plate.

Caroline. But if you were there at the time, aunt, I should suppose you might have found out the truth of such a story.

Mrs. Woodfield. My dear Caroline, you will know, when you have lived and observed a little longer, that nothing is so difficult to obtain as truth. If any uncommon circumstance were to happen at the end of this village, I am convinced that six different people would tell it six different ways. I never therefore expect, even in this country, to hear a thing related exactly as it happened. In another

country this becomes so difficult, that I doubt every thing I hear; and if news is to be brought *from* that country to *this*, I know it is more than probable, that the event it relates has never happened at all.

Elizabeth. But tell me, mamma, what is the use of telling such falsehoods? what *motives* can people have?

Mrs. Woodfield. It is impossible to tell all their motives; but some falsehoods are repeated, only by the want of power in those who relate them to distinguish the truth. Others tell lies, only to give themselves a momentary consequence.—“Bless me, Sir! why I was by at the time, Sir!—I was not half a yard from the place.—You have heard the story wrong, Sir, for thus it was—I was an eye-witness of the whole.”—His gaping audience swallow with avidity the story of a man who asserts a thing so positively;

sively; and then each, proud of having a miraculous history on such good authority, goes away and relates it after his own manner, till the original fact is lost in the obscurity of innumerable misrepresentations.—But come, our transition from wolves to falsehoods must not detain us any longer from our walk; and I believe we may very safely venture into Wolfs Wood, secure that there has probably been no animal of that species in it since the reign of Edward the First.

Henrietta. I am very much obliged to Edward the First, I am sure; for, if he had not made people catch them and kill them all, I should have been frightened to death to have gone out of doors.

Mrs. Woodfield. Now we are all ready, loves; which way shall we go?

Henrietta. Under the elm row, to the corner of the down, is the pleasantest, mamma.

Mrs. Woodfield. I believe it is.

[They go out.]

Mrs. Woodfield. See how *Henrietta* is exploring the hedge-rows for flowers. Oh! she has found some treasure already!

Henrietta. Mamma, I have found such an odd and pretty flower, and so sweet—sweet as an orange blossom—Do tell me the name of it?

Mrs. Woodfield. This is the white sweet smelling orchis; and is of the same genus of plants as those purple ones you gathered some days ago, and the paler lilac-coloured one, marked so beautifully with brown and black lines, which you found in the meadow this morning. If you look upon the down among the short turf, and on the chalky soil, you will find
the

the orchis, whose flower resembles a bee, and another that represents a fly. Oh! Henrietta is fled after them already; she will certainly be a botanist!

Caroline. I hope she won't torment all the world with her knowledge, as Mrs. Tanfy does; who has been reading botanical books, till she fancies herself able to talk of such things to every body, and worries one with something about petals, and styles, and filaments, and I know not what jargon.

Mrs. Woodfield. It would not be jargon, if she understood it herself, and addressed her conversation to those who understood it too; but, unhappily, neither of these is the case. She talks, as many other people do, in the hope of being thought wise; but of those to whom she happens to address herself, some suspect that she is

mad, and all are sure that she is tiresome, It is merely a proof, however, that the poor woman has no judgment in conversation; but she is therefore happier, when, driven back to her solitude, she can tiddle about in her garden, and fancy she shall appear in print as a correspondent to a botanical society; for it happens, that her "love of fame" has taken this turn; and none at least can be more innocent; for my own part, I feel such a disposition to become an enthusiast in the same pursuit, that I am under the necessity of checking myself very frequently, and remembering how many other things I have to do, more material than considering of what genus a flower is, and what are its characters.

Caroline. For, after all, aunt, what does it signify, you know?

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodfield. But the inquiry, dear Caroline, is a great deal more innocent, than an inquiry into the characters of our neighbours.

Caroline. Now, if I might venture to contradict you, aunt, I should certainly observe, that whether the characters of a plant make it belong to this family or that family, it does not signify, if it looks pretty, or smells sweet in our gardens; but if we do not inquire into the characters of our neighbours, we may get acquainted with disagreeable or dangerous people.

Mrs. Woodfield. Your remark is not without some sense in it; but what I mean by inquiries into the characters of our neighbours is, the gossiping of those prying impertinent people, who neglect their own affairs to busy themselves with those of every

body around them. The spirit that prompts Mrs. Brittlecup to set her maid, Nanny, to watch at the garret window who visits her opposite neighbour, Mrs. Tinkettle; makes her ask the butcher's boy what meat he carried that day to Mr. Such-a-one's; and if he knows who is to dine there; sets people to collect the prices of their acquaintances clothes, and then bless themselves "at some folks good fortune, in being able to afford such things."

Caroline. What horrible people, my dear aunt, you have collected!

Mrs. Woodfield. Unhappily for the peace, as well as the pleasure of society, I have not gone far for my collection; they abound in every neighbourhood, and are to be met with among the great vulgar as well as the small. Is it not much better to talk
of

of rhododendrons and toxicodendrons, chrysanthemum, and phycoides, and other hard-named plants, with which our good friend Mrs. Tansy pains the ears of her less enlightened audience.

Elizabeth. Certainly, mamma—my cousin must allow that.

Mrs. Woodfield. Nay, it is better than much other conversation; such as that of people who give you a circumstantial account of all their ailments; tell you what year they felt the first symptoms of the asthma or rheumatism, and by what accident it was occasioned; give you a list of the remedies they have tried, and the names of physicians who prescribed them. It is better than the talk of a notable bustling body who boasts to you of *her* œconomy, and tells you how you might mend your

own : or of one who deals in dreams and omens ;

- “ Talks all the nonsense you can think of ;
- “ Tells you how Jacky had the chin-cough ;
- “ How Jowler bark'd ; and what a fright
- “ She had with dreams the other night.”

Oh, believe me, such conversation as Mrs. Tanfy's is an absolute treat to me, compared with all these. Besides, though she does not know quite so much of the matter as she fancies she does, she knows enough to instruct in some plain and simple matters. For example, Caroline, she could tell you, what I do not believe you know, the names of those beautiful trees under which we are going to walk.

Caroline. Indeed I do know ; they are almost all beech trees.

Mrs. Woodfield. Pardon me ; round the borders of the wood there are

many other forts. But, come, our constant companion Cowper will give us the best list of these majestic plants, with their various attributes. I have the volume in my work-bag, and we will seat ourselves on this fallen tree, and refer to it:

“ Nor less attractive is the woodland scene,

“ Diversified with trees of every growth,

“ Alike, yet various. Here the grey smooth

“ trunks

“ Of ash, or lime, or beech distinctly shine

“ Within the twilight of their distant

“ shades;

“ There, lost behind a rising ground, the

“ wood

“ Seems sunk, and shortened to its topmost

“ boughs;

“ No tree in all the grove but has its

“ charms,

“ Though each its hue peculiar; paler

“ some,

“ And of a wannish grey: the willow such

“ And poplar, that with silver lines his

“ leaf,

- “ And ash, far stretching his umbrageous
“ arm ;
“ Of deeper green the elm ; and deeper still,
“ Lord of the woods, the long-surviving
“ oak.
“ Some glossy leav’d, and shining in the sun,
“ The maple and the beech of oily nuts
“ Prolific, and the lime, at dewy eve,
“ Diffusing odours : nor unnoted pass
“ The sycamore, capricious in attire,
“ Now green, now tawny, and, e’er Au-
“ tumn yet
“ Have chang’d the woods, in scarlet ho-
“ nours bright.”

Many remain, however, which the poet has omitted to mention ; such as, the plain, the linden, the aspen, (though that is indeed a poplar,) the horse chesnut, than which no tree is more beautiful at this season ; the Spanish chesnut, which, when it is in perfection, exceeds, in majesty and beauty of foliage, every tree of the forest ; and the walnut, so useful for furniture,

furniture, though less beautiful than many others, on account of its coming so late into leaf, and losing the leaves on almost the first frost.

Caroline. There are so many of them, that I think I should never recollect them all.

Mrs. Woodfield. That is merely for want of a little observation, to which, however, as a student in landscape, you ought to accustom yourself. How monotonous and uninteresting is a paysage in which there are no variety of trees; or which contains only such as resemble the disfigured broom-shaped elms that one sees about London.

Henrietta. Mamma, there is a man, and two or three of the oddest looking little dogs with him, that seem to be hunting about for something; I am afraid they are going to kill those
sweet

sweet little squirrels that are leaping about so happy among the boughs.

Mrs. Woodfield. No, Henrietta, it is a truffle-hunter.

Elizabeth. What is a truffle?

Mrs. Woodfield. A fungus—some-what resembling a mushroom, but darker, heavier, and more compact. It grows beneath the ground, in the hollows formed by the roots of trees, particularly beech trees, and those odd little mop-headed dogs have the faculty of finding where there are truffles by their smell.

Henrietta. Ask the man to let us look at them, mamma. Dear, what ugly looking lumps! What are they good for?

Mrs. Woodfield. To eat. Sometimes they are boiled, and sent in a napkin to table like roasted potatoes; at other times dried on a string, and used in made dishes.

[A Ser-

[A Servant comes up.]

Servant. Madam, here are some ladies come to pay you a visit: I told them you were not at home, being walked out with the young ladies; but as they seemed to have come from some distance, I desired them to come in and have some refreshment, and I thought it was better to let you know.

Mrs. Woodfield. You have done extremely right—What are the ladies names?

Servant. I only know one of them, Ma'am; Miss Harley.

Mrs. Woodfield. Hasten back, and assure them I am coming immediately, and let Ann send in chocolate.

Caroline. And is it the same young lady you spoke of, Madam, as being very unfortunate?

Mrs. Woodfield. It is the same; and, during our evening walk, I
will

will give you her little melancholy history.

EVENING.

Mrs. Woodfield. Miss Harley is of a very good family. Her father, though a younger brother, was possessed of a very considerable fortune in one of the West India Islands, whither he went at seventeen or eighteen years of age, being invited over by an uncle who possessed a large and flourishing plantation, and who promised to make him his heir. He married, by the desire of his uncle, a young woman of fortune as was then supposed, who, having been educated in England, was sent for back to be united to him, though they had never seen each other before. Miss Harley was their only child. The uncle died when she was about twelve months old; and her parents,

equally impatient to enjoy their affluent fortune in England, came over immediately, leaving their property to the care of agents. They lived in London, and at an estate they purchased in Hampshire, in very great splendour, and even profusion. Miss Harley had the best education that could be given her; and every expence was lavished on her, as the heiress of a man so affluent. At sixteen or seventeen she had many lovers; attracted rather by the reputation of her great fortune than her beauty, though she was then, I have heard, extremely pretty. Her father, who was proud and ambitious, chose for her, among this train of admirers, a young nobleman, whose family was better than his fortune; but it happened that she liked him; and, contrary to what generally happens in such cases, he was the
man

man she would have preferred, had she had the power to choose. Every preparation was making in the most splendid style for their marriage. It was observed that Mr. Harley was sometimes unusually low, and appeared at other times in flurried and unsettled spirits. He often complained of a pain in his head; and, under the pretence that it was made worse by company, he shut himself up in his room for many hours at a time. His own family, and his friends, who were much about him, remarked this change in his manner with much surprize; but they imputed it in a great measure to the anxiety a parent must feel, who was so soon to fix the fate of an only and beloved child.

The day came when the settlements were to be signed; the jewels, equipages, and house were ready; and the next day save one, was fixed for the

the celebration of the nuptials. Mr. Harley, who had agreed by the deeds of settlement to give his daughter an immense fortune, signed them with a trembling hand : but he seemed soon after to regain his serenity, dined with a large party of friends, and went out in the evening at his usual hour. When he came back, Mrs. Harley and the intended bride were gone to make visits. They returned, with the intended bridegroom, to supper. Mr. Harley's valet de chambre was sent to inform him they waited for him. He found him dead, and too evidently by his own hand. The man, in the extreme terror which assailed him on such a spectacle, had yet so much presence of mind as to call up the housekeeper, and consult with her on the means of discovering to the wife and daughter this dreadful event ; but, in despite of all his precaution, they

they were too soon apprized of it. The scene that followed may be imagined, but cannot be described.

On his table, the unhappy man had left a paper, containing a few lines, to this effect: “ Imprudence and in-
“ fatuation on my part, and the vil-
“ lany of others, have combined to
“ strip me of all my property. I am
“ a beggar, and I cannot survive my
“ disgrace. I meditated to marry
“ my poor injured Eleanor to Lord
“ H. before this should be known;
“ but I should then but injure them
“ both more irreparably. I recom-
“ mend to my very unfortunate wife
“ to retire, with our dear wronged girl,
“ to some cheap part of the coun-
“ try, where her jointure, if indeed
“ there is not a flaw in it, may enable
“ her still to live, in some measure,
“ as she has been accustomed to do.
“ I recommend her and my daughter
“ to

“ to the protection of my brother,
“ and the kindness of my family !”

Poor Eleanor thought, as soon as she was in a condition to make any observations, that her lover had entirely changed his intentions. The affairs of Mr. Harley were found even in greater confusion than he had represented. The creditors had put their claims into the management of an attorney, who, having been the confidential lawyer of the unfortunate Harley, knew of the flaw in his widow's settlement, and was the first to point it out to them. Mrs. Harley was deprived of every thing but about two hundred a year, on which she prepared to retire into the north of England; Lord H. having, immediately after Mr. Harley's death, taken leave of Miss Harley for ever, with hardly an affectation of concern. She had loved him, and
this

this seemed the most bitter of all her sorrows.

But they were not yet complete. Her mother, unable to bear so cruel a reverse of fortune, sunk into the grave; and Eleanor became absolutely destitute, and dependant on the bounty of her uncle. This uncle had an only son and two daughters. The son died of a fever in Italy, by which means the daughters became very large fortunes. Lord H. whose purpose it was to ally himself to fortune, addressed the elder, and was accepted; and the unfortunate Eleanor saw the jewels that had been presented to her, (which were of course returned,) the equipages, and all the luxuries she was to have possessed, now her cousin's, a young woman without an heart, who had the cruelty to keep Eleanor with her, under pretence of kindness, but in reality to insult

her

her who, but a few weeks before, was an object of envy. Eleanor bore it for some time with that silent patience which looks like fortitude, but it was the torpor of an exhausted spirit. A violent and dangerous fever had nearly put an end to her miseries. When she recovered, her noble relations had quitted their house in town, and were gone into a distant county. They left a cold letter, intimating their hopes of her recovery, and that they should be glad to see her on their return. But what was to become of her in the mean time, seemed to make no part of their contemplation. It required no great strength of mind to determine to submit to any degree of indigence, rather than continue dependent on the bounty of Lady H.; and she resolved even to embrace a life of servitude, rather than again undergo the miseries

she

she had lately experienced. The pride of her relations would not suffer them to let her do this; and one of them, who lives in this neighbourhood, has taken her now for two or three years, and, I believe, behaves not unkindly to her. But dependence, to a person who has been brought up to prospects so very different, cannot fail of being very painful; and, I think, that it is so to poor Miss Harley, may be read in her languid and dejected countenance; though, within this last year, she has made many efforts to conquer the deep despondence in which she has so long been sunk. She now rides out, and sometimes goes into public, though I think the other night was the first time I ever saw her dance; even then she seemed to move mechanically. Spiritless, and lost to all hope, it is too probable that the sad comparison between what

she

she was and what she is, is perpetually recurring to her. Her manners, however, are gentle and interesting; and, I am told, that she is highly accomplished, particularly in music, but that is now extremely distressing to her to perform; and she has prevailed on the friends she lives with, never to ask her to play or sing in company. I have been selfish enough to regret this, though I would not for the world ask her to oblige me at the expence of giving her pain; otherwise I should have had a melancholy pleasure in hearing her sing two or three affecting Italian airs; but more particularly, that little mournful English poem, Queen Mary's Lament, in which, I have been assured, she gives to some of the lines a pathos that draws tears from all who know her story.

Caroline. Oh, aunt! I wish *I* had never known it,

Elizabeth (weeping). And I am very sorry that I who *did* know it, at least partly, was so inconsiderate the other night. I hope she did not think it intentional.

Mrs. Woodfield. Perhaps she hardly remarked it. The petty occurrences of society, which may engage for a little while the idle and the happy, make, I believe, but little impression on a mind absorbed in its own incurable sorrows. But, my dear children, we shall make one another melancholy, if we pursue this subject. It is already later than I was aware of; we will return home by the green lane below. How serene is the evening closing in! observe the planet Vesper; how unusually bright is that lovely star!

Henrietta.

Henrietta. And here are little vespers, I think. Mamma, I have seen seven or eight glow-worms this evening.

Mrs. Woodfield. It is in these grassy lanes, on moist banks, that these luminous insects most frequently appear. Do you recollect, my dear girls, how mortified you were last summer, when you carried home some of these brilliant creatures, and found them the next day as ugly and misshapen insects as could be seen.

Henrietta. I want to understand how it is that they shine, and what they live upon, and where they go to in the winter.

Mrs. Woodfield. I am not qualified to give you their natural history; but I will repeat to you an *Ode to the Glow-worm**, which, though irre-

* By Dr. Wallot.

gular and wild, appears to me to be as beautiful as any little piece of poetry in the English language : and this I do the more readily, as it is, I believe, inserted in a work not read by young people :

“ Bright stranger ! welcome to my field,
“ Here feed in safety, here thy radiance
“ yield ;

“ To me, oh, nightly be thy splendours
“ given ;

“ Oh ! could a wish of mine the skies com-
“ mand,

“ How would I gem the leaf with liberal
“ hand,

“ With every sweetest dew of heaven !

“ Say—dost thou kindly light the fairy
“ train

“ Amidst their gambols on the stilly plain,
“ Hanging thy lamp upon the moist-
“ ten’d blade ?

“ What lamp so fit, so pure as thine,

“ Amidst the gentle Elfin band to shine,

“ And chase the horrors of the mid-
“ night shade !

“ Oh !

" Oh! may no tempest's rage disturb thy
" peace.

" And with barbarian hands thy life devour!

" Oh! may no ruthless torrent of the
" sky

" O'erwhelming, force thee from thy dewy
" seat,

" Nor tempest tear thee from thy green
" retreat,

" To bid thee, midst the humming
" myriads, die!

" Queen of the insect world! what leaves
" delight?

" Of such, these willing hands a bower
" shall form,

" To guard thee from the rushing rains of
" night,

" And hide thee from the wild wing of
" the storm.

" Sweet child of stillness! 'mid the awful
" calm

" Of pausing nature, thou art pleas'd to
" dwell

" In happy silence, to enjoy the balm,

" And shed, through life, a lustre round
" thy cell.

" How

- “ How different man ! the imp of noise and
“ strife,
“ Who courts the storm that tears and
“ darkens life,
“ Blest when the passions wild his soul
“ invade ;
“ How nobler far to bid the whirlwind
“ cease,
“ To taste, like thee, the luxury of peace,
“ And shine in solitude and shade !”

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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